

The JOURNAL of the AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY FOUNDATION

VOL. II

WINTER, 1938

No. 4

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The JOURNAL is published quarterly by the American Military History Foundation, 3022 Porter Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., which supplies one copy of each issue to all members without charge. The subscription price is three dollars a year (postage prepaid).

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Entered as second-class matter January 7, 1938, at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912.



JOHN C. FREMONT

Engraving based on a painting by Alonzo Chappel

FRÉMONT AND THE POLITICIANS

By T. Harry Williams

IN THE early summer of 1861, with the clouds of civil war thickening over the sundered Union, President Lincoln commissioned John C. Frémont a major general and appointed him to the command of the Western Department. The new general, romantically known to the public by reason of his explorations, journeyed to his headquarters at St. Louis amidst ringing applause from the whole North. From all sides came confident predictions that the dashing "Pathfinder" would give the country action and that Missouri would soon be cleared of Confederates. Powerful political elements had combined their forces to secure this important post for a man with scanty military training and experience. Horace Greeley, editor of the influential New York *Tribune*, pointed out the political advantages that would accrue to the administration from bestowing high military office upon the Republican party's first presidential candidate. Gustave Koerner, leader of the anti-slavery German population of the Mississippi valley, assured Lincoln that the appointment of Frémont, known to be opposed to slavery, would unite his countrymen in support of the war. Senator Trumbull of Illinois, a dominant figure in the councils of the Republican party, emphasized the popular approval that would greet Frémont's appearance in the armed forces of the nation. Most important of all, the politically powerful Blair family—the father, the unofficial adviser of the President; one son in the Cabinet; and another the chieftain of the Republican party in Missouri—had chosen Frémont as their political cat's paw and had thrown their influence behind his elevation to command.¹

An acute observer, familiar with Frémont's primadonna temperament and past career, could have predicted that he would be a military failure and a hindrance to any scientific, large-scale conduct of the war. Frémont owed his prominent public position to a vivid personality that invested his every action with drama, and to a fortuitous marriage with the intrepid Jessie Benton, daughter of Senator Thomas Hart Benton, political boss of Missouri and trusted friend of Andrew Jackson.² His explorations in the western territory and his reports had earned him the sobriquet of "Pathfinder," although "Pathmarker" of other men's discoveries would have been a more accurate title.³

Frémont first appeared in American military history in connection with the

¹ New York *Tribune*, May 15, 30, 1861, quoted in R. J. Bartlett, *John C. Frémont and the Republican Party* (Columbus, 1930), 71; T. J. McCormick (ed.), *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner* (Cedar Rapids, 1909), II, 152; Koerner to Lyman Trumbull, May 31, 1861, Trumbull MSS. (in Library of Congress); Frémont to Trumbull, July 13, 1861, *ibid.*; W. E. Smith, *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics* (New York, 1933) II, 56-59; C. R. Fish, *The American Civil War* (New York, 1937), 272-273.

² S. E. White, *The Forty-Niners* (*Chronicles of America*, XXV, New Haven, 1918), 29; Fish, *Civil War*, 273. St. Louis was a Benton stronghold, and this undoubtedly influenced Lincoln in assigning Frémont to the West.

³ White, *Forty-Niners*, 29; Seymour Dunbar, *A History of Travel in America* (New York, 1937), 1213.

conquest of the province of California in the Mexican War. At a time when relations between the United States and Mexico were becoming strained and war seemed imminent, he had entered California at the head of an official expedition of exploration. He bore a commission of lieutenant colonel in the Topographical Engineers, and, it was later charged, had had secret instructions to aid any revolt of the American settlers against the Mexican authorities. Whatever the case, his actions were mysterious and provocative. When the Americans raised the standard of rebellion, he became their leader. Only the government's declaration of war against Mexico saved him from the embarrassment that might have followed his impetuous action.⁴ Frémont took part in the easy subjugation of California that followed, and Commodore Stockton, in command of the naval detachment, appointed him military governor. Then General Stephen W. Kearny arrived to take control of the province. The old soldier ordered Frémont's men mustered into the regular service; but Frémont, who disliked to share authority, refused to obey the order. Outraged, Kearny placed him under military arrest. A court-martial found him guilty of mutiny, disobedience, and misconduct, and he was dismissed from the service. But President Polk, at Benton's insistence, pardoned him. Frémont proudly refused the pardon and resigned his commission.⁵

After this painful military experience, Frémont turned easily to other activities. He became a resident of California, invested money in various enterprises, and dabbled in politics. When California became a state, the legislature chose the Pathfinder as one of its United States senators. He identified himself with the political elements in the country that were opposed to slavery and southern domination of the government. When these factions coalesced in 1856 into a new national party, the Republican, Frémont took part in the movement. The managers of the young party, casting about for a presidential candidate, selected the popular, magnetic Pathfinder as their standard bearer. He willingly entered the race.⁶ Although defeated by the Democrat Buchanan, Frémont remained a potent political figure. Such was the man, impetuous, ambitious, bold, to whom Lincoln, for considerations largely political, now gave one of the most important commands at his disposal.

The situation that greeted Frémont upon his arrival in St. Louis on July 26 (five days after Bull Run) would have taxed the abilities of an abler and more stable character. Missouri was rife with Confederate sympathizers, and only the determined efforts of General Nathaniel Lyon and Frank Blair had kept the state in the Union. Confederate forces menaced St. Louis. The poorly equipped Federal forces were inadequate to hold the department against a strong attack.

⁴ White, 30-36; Dunbar, 1276-78; J. G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Boston, 1937), 116; Fish, *Civil War*, 273.

⁵ White, 42-44.

⁶ Allan Nevins, *Frémont, the West's Greatest Adventurer* (New York, 1928), II, 473-518; Randall, *Civil War*, 142-144; Fish, *Civil War*, 88, 273; N. W. Stephenson, *Lincoln and the Union* (*Chronicles of America*, XXIX, New Haven, 1918), 31.

For a time Frémont wisely attempted no operations on a large scale, but devoted his efforts to strengthening the defences of St. Louis and Cairo and to organizing his resources. He constantly requisitioned the government for more men and supplies, although the over-burdened authorities found it impossible to meet his demands.⁷ The inability of the War Department to satisfy his many requests was, under the circumstances, natural enough. But the suspicious general concluded that someone wanted him to fail, and he voiced bitter criticism of the administration.⁸ Embittered against West Pointers since his court-martial, Frémont blamed the officers of the regular army for many of his difficulties. He believed them jealous of his rapid elevation and hostile toward him because he was a civilian. His outspoken wife, who always shared and frequently formed his opinions, confided bitterly to a friend: "I am not ready to cramp down to the United States Army. Although we won't think the worse of a good man for being in it. But this is a day for men, not rules, to govern affairs."⁹

Frémont's resentment toward the administration, coupled with his audacious nature, now impelled him to a rash move. His political activities had thrown him into close, confidential relations with the so-called "Radical" faction of the Republican party. The Radicals, more than any other group composing the party, hated slavery and the Southern social system. In the outbreak of war they sensed an opportunity to destroy both. Their leaders had pressed upon Lincoln demands for emancipation of the slaves of "rebels" by individual commanders in the field. But the desperate President, striving to hold together a conservative coalition devoted to the sole task of preserving the Union, refused to sanction this use of the war powers. To the disgusted Radicals, it seemed that Lincoln meant to conduct the war without striking a single blow at slavery. Into this troubled situation, Frémont, with an action that could have proceeded only from a civilian entering the army fresh from political life, suddenly intervened. On August 30 he issued a military proclamation, one section of which freed the slaves of those owners in his department who had "actively" assisted the Confederate cause.¹⁰

The popular outburst in favor of this action was tremendous and instantaneous. Upon the Radical Republicans, the anti-slavery principle of the proclamation fell like welcome manna from heaven. Frémont's bold move pointed the way to a

⁷ William Wood, *Captains of the Civil War (Chronicles of America, XXI*, New Haven, 1921), 118-119. Wood considers that Frémont performed an efficient job in organizing the department.

⁸ Frémont to Trumbull, July 13, 1861, Trumbull MSS.; Mrs. Frémont to Montgomery Blair, July 25, Smith, *Blair Family*, II, 58.

⁹ Mrs. Frémont to B. B. Lee, July 27, 1861, Smith, II, 59. One of Frémont's political supporters, Representative Shanks of Indiana, later charged that the regular army officers opposed Frémont because "he had not received with them the rite of infant baptism at West Point." See J. P. C. Shanks, *Vindication of Major-General John C. Frémont* (Washington, 1862), 5.

¹⁰ *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1881-1901), Series I, III, 467, hereafter cited as O. R.

method whereby slavery could be abolished. The Radicals loudly applauded the man who had dared to strike a real blow at the hated institution. Their press warned Lincoln not to revoke a measure that eventually must become a settled policy of the government.¹¹ But the astute President knew that the proclamation, if permitted to stand, would alienate those northern and border state conservatives who would uphold a war to restore the Union but not an anti-slavery crusade. Their support of the government was imperative at this point. Accordingly Lincoln asked Frémont to modify the section of his proclamation dealing with slavery. When the general refused, Lincoln issued an order countermanding that part of the edict.¹²

The President's repudiation of Frémont aroused a storm of Radical criticism. It also set on foot, and itself exemplified, one of those frequent episodes of political interference by civilians with the military machine that characterized northern conduct of the war. "Bluff Ben" Wade, senator from Ohio and long a bitter foe of the slavery interests, and tight-lipped Zachariah Chandler of Michigan, his close companion in Radicalism, voiced angry criticism of Lincoln and praise of Frémont. Wade contemptuously declared that Lincoln's action could have proceeded only from a person sprung from "poor white trash."¹³ The scholarly, humorless Charles Sumner, representing Massachusetts in the Senate, claimed that only by the adoption of the principles in the proclamation could the North hope to achieve victory.¹⁴ From Senator James W. Grimes of Iowa and Representative "Smiler" Colfax of Indiana came dire warnings that Lincoln's policy would lose the Republican party thousands of votes in the West.¹⁵ Editors and state political leaders spoke in similar strain, and many predicted ominously that Frémont would supplant Lincoln as the party's presidential nominee in 1864.¹⁶

While the political cauldron boiled with charges and counter-charges, Frémont's position became increasingly untenable. Large bodies of Confederate troops under Sterling Price and Ben McCulloch were at large in Missouri. On August 10 the

¹¹ New York *Tribune*, September 1, 2, 1861; New York *Times*, September 2; New York *Evening Post*, September 2; New York *Sun*, September 3; Frank Leslie's *Newspaper*, September 21.

¹² Lincoln to Frémont, September 2, Lincoln's order of September 11, J. G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, a History* (New York, 1890), IV, 418, 420; Frémont's refusal to modify his proclamation, *O. R.*, Ser. I, III, 477.

¹³ Benjamin F. Wade to Zachariah Chandler, September 23, 1861, Chandler MSS. (in Library of Congress); Detroit *Post and Tribune*, *Life of Zachariah Chandler* (Detroit, 1888), 253-254, hereafter cited as *Life of Chandler*.

¹⁴ Sumner to Francis Lieber, September 17, E. L. Pierce, *Memoir and Letters of Charles Sumner* (Boston, 1893), IV, 42.

¹⁵ Grimes to W. P. Fessenden, September 19, W. Salter, *Life of James W. Grimes* (New York, 1876), 152-153; South Bend *Register*, Colfax's organ, quoted in New York *Tribune*, September 28.

¹⁶ New York *Tribune*, September 16, 18; John Jay to Joseph Holt, September 27, Holt MSS. (in Library of Congress); *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, September 28; John Russell to Lyman Trumbull, December 17, Trumbull MSS.; J. R. Giddings to Mrs. G. W. Julian, September 17, Giddings-Julian MSS. (in Library of Congress).

popular General Lyon, with a small Union force, engaged McCulloch at Wilson's Creek. The Confederates won the victory, and Lyon fell on the field of battle. Frémont's critics ascribed the reverse to the Pathfinder's failure to rush reinforcements, while he retorted that Lyon had rashly advanced too rapidly. A month later a Federal detachment at Lexington under Colonel Mulligan suffered defeat. People began to ask why Frémont took no decisive action against the Confederate armies.¹⁷ At the same time rumors became current that the general's relations with contractors and his purchase of war materials had an unsavory odor. Secretary of War Cameron, whose own skirts were none too clean, made a hurried trip to St. Louis and condemned the construction of defensive works around the city. Later the House of Representatives' Committee on Contracts appeared to ferret out evidence of alleged corruption. Men with important business to transact complained that Frémont so surrounded himself with brilliantly attired foreign aides that they could not reach him. The general himself climaxed this list of complaints by embroiling himself in a bitter quarrel with his erstwhile sponsors and would-be directors, the Blairs. Montgomery Blair, Postmaster-General in Lincoln's cabinet, and his younger brother Frank, leader of the St. Louis Republicans, had been largely instrumental in securing Frémont his command. Frank, who possessed a commission of colonel of volunteers, was with Frémont in St. Louis. It was not long before the friendly relations between the two civilian officers developed into open enmity. Blair criticized Frémont's awarding of contracts, feared his political ambitions, and opposed the famous emancipation proclamation. Finally the irritated general (following Kearny's earlier example against his own person) placed Blair under military arrest. In Washington Blair's angered brother brought pressure on Lincoln to remove Frémont.¹⁸

In the face of this accumulated hostility, Frémont's political friends rallied to his support. Senator Lyman Trumbull went to St. Louis and after a conference with the general, wrote to Lincoln expostulating against the failure of the government to sustain its western commander.¹⁹ When Cameron made his inspection of the department, Senator Chandler was on hand to see that the general's interests were protected.²⁰ Ben Wade assured the worried officer that the people had "unbounded confidence" in him, and encouraged him to "persevere in the course you

¹⁷ Wood, *Captains of the Civil War*, 119-120; Fish, *Civil War*, 272; Stephenson, *Lincoln and the Union*, 146-147; R. S. Henry, *Story of the Confederacy* (New York, 1931), 65-66.

¹⁸ Smith, *Blair Family*, II, 66-68, 74-84; Bartlett, *Frémont*, 75-81; General J. M. Palmer to Lyman Trumbull, September 22, Trumbull MSS., Gustave Koerner to Trumbull, November 15, *ibid.*; J. R. Shepley to Senator W. P. Fessenden, September 17, Fessenden MSS. (in Library of Congress); Washington *National Intelligencer*, October 16, 17; Cincinnati *Inquirer*, October 4; R. H. Meneely, *The War Department, 1861* (New York, 1928), 269-270.

¹⁹ Lyman Trumbull to Lincoln, October 1, 1861, Trumbull MSS.

²⁰ General J. M. Palmer to Trumbull, October 13, *ibid.*; Zachariah Chandler to Mrs. Chandler, October 12, Chandler MSS. Chandler was privately of the opinion that Frémont was a failure.

have thus far pursued.”²¹ The pontifical Greeley declared his retention in command a military necessity, while Frémont’s organ in St. Louis threatened a revolt of the western army if its dashing leader were removed.²²

But the weary Lincoln, his vast fund of patience exhausted, had determined that the unruly commander of the Western Department would have to go. On October 24 he issued an order removing him from command. The fatal document was delivered to Frémont while he was following Price’s Confederates across Missouri, and General David Hunter immediately assumed control of the department. The anger of the Radicals at this final indignity to their cherished favorite was intense. Caustic old Thaddeus Stevens, who directed the Republican machine in the House, spoke bitterly of “the hounds” who had “run down” Frémont. Recrimination of the President and his conservative program mingled with gloomy predictions that the Republican party was on the verge of dissolution.²³ In a speech at St. Louis, the removed general defended his record and announced that he was returning east “to answer all these charges more definitely.”²⁴ He went first to New York, where he was feted by the anti-slavery forces of the metropolis, and heard prominent Radicals laud his proclamation before a great mass meeting at Cooper Institute.²⁵

Frémont’s political allies were resolved to rehabilitate their military hero and force Lincoln to assign him to an important command. They found the desired opportunity when Congress met in December. His removal had convinced the leaders that the administration would not tolerate any officer who believed in using his position to abolish slavery. They resented the predominant number of West Pointers holding important commands. Such men, reasoned the angry Radicals, had no concept of the moral and political principles involved in the war; they would never issue emancipation edicts or enlist fugitive slaves in the army. The Radicals even suspected the regular army officers of nourishing a secret sympathy for the South. Consummation of the Radical program demanded officers who, like Frémont, hated slavery. Determined to probe the secrets of army administration and to inject some Radical blood into the military body, the leaders decided to push a measure through Congress creating an investigative committee endowed with broad powers to inquire into all phases of the conduct of the war. It was intended that the proposed agency should also act as an unofficial supervisor of the executive branch and of the army. The result of their plans was the joint Com-

²¹ Wade to Frémont, middle of October, Nevins, *Frémont*, II, 623.

²² New York *Tribune*, October 29, 30, 31; St. Louis *Missouri Democrat*, quoted in *National Intelligencer*, November 6.

²³ Thaddeus Stevens, letter of November 5, Stevens MSS. (in Library of Congress); Richard Smith to S. P. Chase, November 7, Nevins, *Frémont*, II, 624; Senator Grimes to Mrs. Grimes, November 13, Salter, *Grimes*, 154-155; Koerner to Trumbull, November 18, Trumbull MSS.

²⁴ *National Intelligencer*, November 16.

²⁵ Nevins, *Frémont*, II, 625.

mittee on the Conduct of the War. This powerful body operated for the full period of the conflict, poked an inquisitorial finger into every phase of military operations, and labored to secure Radical domination of the army. Its three and one-half years of existence represents the acme, in American military history, of civilian interference with the direction of military operations.²⁶

That a justification and defense of Frémont's military record was one of the purposes back of the establishment of the Committee appeared clearly in the debates following the introduction of the measure. Senator Chandler, the author, proposed a committee to investigate Union defeats in the East, but Lane of Kansas, who believed "West Point pro-slaveryism" was paralyzing the army, moved to insert Wilson's Creek in the list of disasters. He wanted to know whether Frémont could have reenforced Lyon at that battle and if the failure to do so was the fault of the President or "of some subordinate officer."²⁷ Grimes praised the Pathfinder's handling of affairs in the West and asserted that the proposed committee should determine whether his removal was an act of justice.²⁸ As a result of the insistence of the two senators, the Committee as finally constituted possessed the general power to inquire into the "conduct of the war."

The personnel of the Committee insured that Frémont would receive a friendly hearing if it investigated his record. Senator Wade, the chairman, was a close friend and frequent correspondent of the general's. Chandler stood in the same relation and had visited Frémont at St. Louis. Both were ardent Radicals, and both had approved the general's proclamation and censured Lincoln's modification. The leading House member, George W. Julian, was on intimate terms with the general's entire family and a recipient of many letters from Frémont's wife.²⁹

At the first meeting of the Committee, on December 20, the members resolved to take up Frémont's cause. Wade addressed a communication to Secretary of War Cameron requesting information relative to the Western Department; and, upon receiving a reply which they deemed unsatisfactory, the Committee decided to establish the facts of the case through an investigation of its own. Frémont was summoned to appear in Washington on January 6.³⁰

Obedient to this request, the Pathfinder and his intrepid wife arrived in the capital, to find themselves the darlings of Radical society and the center of excited political gossip. Hailed as a martyr to the cause of freedom, the general was the hero of the Radical leaders. At a White House ball, to which Wade and other

²⁶ For the establishment of the Committee, see *Congressional Globe*, 37 Cong., 2 Sess., pt. 1, pp. 16-17, 29-32. The records of the Committee exist in eight volumes, three published in 1863, three in 1865, and two in 1866.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

²⁹ G. J. Clark, *George W. Julian* (Indianapolis, 1923), 223-224.

³⁰ *Reports of the Committee on the Conduct of the War*, 1863, I, 68-69, hereafter cited as *C. C. W.*

adamant Radicals refused invitations, the Frémonts received so many flattering expressions of sympathy from the admiring guests that they left early in order to save the President from embarrassment.³¹ Canny Edwin M. Stanton, soon to become Secretary of War but now practicing law in Washington and fraternizing with the Radicals, observed the social scene and concluded that the Committee and its allies would use Frémont as a weapon with which to displace General George B. McClellan from the command of the Union armies.³²

Frémont did not meet the committee until January 10, 1862. When he appeared, the general explained that he had not yet prepared a formal written statement of his case. Wade replied that such a procedure was desirable and advised him to submit a written history of his administration in the West.³³ Seven days later the general again attended in the committee rooms and read a long defence of his activities. He stressed the wide powers of discretion granted by the administration to achieve his military objectives and answered charges of extravagance in the construction of forts and in army contracts. Lyon's defeat, he explained, was due to that officer's own impetuosity and not to any failure of his to send reinforcements. He had judged that before Missouri could be cleared of the enemy, Cairo and St. Louis must be made safe; and having accomplished this task, he was on the point of crushing Price when he was removed.³⁴

After listening to the reading of this document, the Committee instructed one of the members, Daniel Gooch, to study the statement and prepare to cross-examine Frémont at a future date. On January 30 the general testified for the third and last time. Gooch, assisted by other members, asked a number of friendly questions designed to aid Frémont's defence. Many were so phrased that they were but repetitions of charges against the administration contained in Frémont's written statement.³⁵ The witness and his amicable inquisitors discussed at length the specific charges flung at his administration by hostile critics. Although Frémont defended all his financial transactions, he conceded that he had permitted subordinates to draw up the details of contracts which he signed without a close examination.³⁶ But, he explained, if he had failed to observe the punctilio of military propriety, the administration was equally guilty because of its failure to

³¹ Nevins, *Frémont*, II, 631-632.

³² Edwin M. Stanton to Samuel Barlow, January 7, 1862, Frank Flower, *Edwin Mc-Masters Stanton* (Akron, 1905), 123.

³³ *C. C. W.*, 1863, III, 32.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 33-43. All the hearings were conducted in secret, the witness appearing alone before the Committee.

³⁵ Thus Gooch repeated one of Frémont's charges, "When you left Washington for your department, you knew of course, that you would find a great deficiency of arms in the department?" Frémont then proceeded to elaborate this point. *Ibid.*, 44. Again in discussing criticism of the forts built by Frémont, Gooch observed that the army engineers, being men of theory, were not competent judges. *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 44-60. The witness stated that he had never received a report from the contractors engaged in building the forts regarding the cost or the progress of the work.

render him adequate support and supplies.³⁷ He explained again that at Wilson's Creek, Lyon had pushed on to an advanced position when everyone supposed his forces were retreating to safety.³⁸ The Committee was especially eager to hear about the ill-fated proclamation of emancipation, and Frémont gave it a full description. He justified his action with the plea of military necessity: "Our means there were all the time very inadequate, and I thought that the time had come when it was necessary to strike some decided blow against the enemy . . ." The proclamation, he maintained, operated "admirably," and the results of its modification were "injurious."³⁹ Although it was the manifesto that had cost him the confidence of the administration, the witness believed the real reason for his removal was the failure of Frank Blair's friends to secure military contracts.⁴⁰

The Committee was eminently satisfied with Frémont's defense, and exaggerated reports of its gratification escaped from the ostensible secrecy of the committee rooms to the public. He had "staggered" them by the ease with which he disproved accusations; the members were convinced that Generals Buell and Halleck had merely copied the removed commander's plans of operation. The whispering gallery of Washington rumor thrilled to a report that the Committee would elevate Frémont into McClellan's place as leader of the Army of the Potomac.⁴¹ Spurred by these cheering stories, the general's partisans demanded that the rehabilitated officer be restored to active service. Edwin M. Stanton, the new and Radical Secretary of War, emphatically assured the most ardent of his supporters, Charles A. Dana of the New York *Tribune's* editorial staff: "If General Frémont has any fight in him he shall (so far as I am concerned) have a chance to show it, and I have told him so."⁴²

Although many of the rumors reaching the public were magnified and inaccurate, Frémont's vindication had made a real impression upon the receptive Committee. Wade was bitterly convinced that the general had been the innocent and unfortunate victim of a wicked plot. In a remarkable letter to Dana a few days after Frémont concluded his testimony, the chairman of the Committee scathingly assailed Lincoln as the author of a supreme injustice:

The character of so many persons and the deep and excited feelings of the community are so involved in Frémont's case that it may be very long before the committee can complete their investigations especially as the witnesses are so remote and widely scattered and it is a settled rule of the committee to keep everything secret until the final publication. But in strict privacy I will say this to you, that the investigation has proceeded far enough to convince me beyond a doubt, that no public man since Admiral Byng was sacrificed by a weak and wicked administration, to appease the wrath of an indignant people, has suffered so unjustly as General Frémont. This persecution will prove the darkest page in

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 62-66.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 75-77.

⁴¹ Diary of General Samuel P. Heintzelman, MS. (in Library of Congress), entry of February 14, 1862; J. R. Howard, *Remembrance of Things Past* (New York, 1925), 173; William Brotherhead, *General Frémont* (Philadelphia, 1862), 9.

⁴² Stanton to Charles A. Dana, February 1, 1862, Dana MSS. (in Library of Congress).

our history and while it is impossible for me to say anything in public at present . . . I intend privately to make a full statement of the case to the Secretary of War and if possible prevail upon him to restore the general to some active and useful command . . . You may be assured that whatever influence I have, will be exerted with him, in favor of the General.

I should have done this before, but have only just reached a point in the investigation, enabling me to know with *certainty* that I am right.⁴³

Although Wade was already persuaded of the righteousness of Frémont's cause, he continued the investigation. Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, once the sponsor but now an inveterate enemy of the general, appeared as a witness and excoriated his former favorite's conduct of operations in Missouri.⁴⁴ He was followed by his brother Frank, who described the difficulties he experienced while serving under Frémont, blamed the general for the Union defeats in the state, and flayed him for questionable relations with crooked contractors.⁴⁵ Four officers of the western army stated that Frémont was not responsible for Lyon's defeat at Wilson Creek. They declared that the latter's officers advised Lyon to withdraw from his position, and that it was supposed at Frémont's headquarters that he was falling back.⁴⁶ General Hunter, the Pathfinder's successor, received a rough and sarcastic reception and a series of hostile questions.⁴⁷ The contractor who had built the disputed forts encountered the same treatment when he implied that Frémont was guilty of oversight.⁴⁸

Armed with the results of their inquiries, the Committee descended upon Lincoln with threatening demands that he again place Frémont in active service. The harassed President capitulated to this pressure by creating the Mountain Department in western Virginia and placing Frémont in command. This necessitated detaching troops from General McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, then about to launch an attack upon Richmond by way of the Peninsula. McClellan wanted control of every available man for this important campaign and he bitterly protested an independent assignment for Frémont.⁴⁹

The Pathfinder's second military adventure was far from glorious. When Stonewall Jackson broke into the Valley and threatened Washington for the purpose of drawing off troops from McClellan, Frémont's was one of several

⁴³ Wade to Dana, February 3, *ibid.* One month later Frémont furnished the Press with copies of his written statement before the Committee. The *New York Tribune*, March 4, published it in an extra sheet, and carried a supporting editorial.

⁴⁴ *C. C. W.*, 1863, III, 154-156.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 156-163. Frank Blair asserted he had had no difficulties with Frémont because of contracts. The general had complied with his wishes on the few occasions that Blair requested favors for his friends. *Ibid.*, 177-179.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 186-194, testimony of Major Charles Zagonyi; 194-197, Major J. M. Savage; 198-210, Colonel I. C. Woods; 225-227, General S. D. Sturgis.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 234-235.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 270-279.

⁴⁹ *O. R.*, Series I, V, 54, Lincoln's order of March 11, 1862; Wood, *Captains of the Civil War*, 199-200; Randall, *Civil War*, 292; Frémont to G. W. Julian, April 27, Giddings-Julian MSS.; *New York World*, January 19, 1863.

armies dispatched to intercept him. Jackson easily eluded Frémont and finally defeated him at Cross Keys.⁵⁰ In the reorganization following McClellan's defeat by Lee, Frémont and his army were placed under the command of General John Pope, whose commission bore a later date than the Pathfinder's. Again Frémont engaged in a controversy with his superior officer, the President. He and his supporters charged that Lincoln was trying to force him into retirement by making him serve under a junior officer.⁵¹ Rather than submit to this indignity, he asked to be relieved of duty, and Lincoln promptly acceded to his request. But Frémont still dreamed of military glory, and was soon pulling political strings to secure another independent command. He continually badgered Stanton for an assignment and the secretary repeatedly assured him of the War Department's good will.⁵²

The general's friends on the Committee girded themselves for another battle to secure justice for their protege. They were particularly anxious to restore him to command in the early months of 1863 because at that time Union forces were occupying large areas in North Carolina and Louisiana, and multitudes of Negroes were flocking to the army camps. To enlist these fugitives in the army was the primary object of the Radical leaders, and to this end they wanted emancipationists on the order of Frémont and Ben Butler, both civilians, in control. Julian of the Committee fired the opening gun in a speech in the House on February 18, denouncing Lincoln for filling the army with officers opposed to the use of Negro soldiers and for refusing a command to "this meritorious Republican major-general," Frémont.⁵³ Washington dispatches announced that the general's friends had secured for him a command in North Carolina,⁵⁴ but these reports were unfounded. Finally Julian went to the White House early in March to make a personal appeal, but to no avail.⁵⁵ Then the desperate general himself came to Washington and held a number of secret conferences with his supporters on the Committee.⁵⁶

The failure of the Radical forces to secure Frémont's restoration prompted Wade to release the report on the Western Department in April. In the same month the Committee published the results of its investigation of the Army of the Potomac under McClellan. This broadside was a resounding attack on the latter, and bristled with criticism of Lincoln for sustaining such an officer. In contrast the report on western affairs was a complete and laudatory exoneration

⁵⁰ Wood, 208-209, 216; Randall, 292.

⁵¹ New York *Tribune*, June 18, 28, 1862.

⁵² Stanton to Frémont, March 21, 1863, Stanton MSS. (in Library of Congress); Frémont to Stanton, July 3, *ibid.*; Robert Bonner to Stanton, March 2, *ibid.*

⁵³ G. W. Julian, *Speeches on Political Questions* (New York, 1872), 204; Detroit *Free Press*, February 22, 1863; New York *Tribune*, February 12.

⁵⁴ St. Louis *Missouri Democrat*, February 6; Rochester *Union*, in Detroit *Free Press*, February 22.

⁵⁵ G. W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840-1872* (Chicago, 1884), 229-230.

⁵⁶ New York *Tribune*, March 10, 24; Detroit *Free Press*, March 10.

of the much criticized Frémont. The authors admitted that their evidence was too scanty to enable them to present a comprehensive report. After a brief summary of events in the department while Frémont was in command, the document proceeded to more specific issues. The Committee refused to give a positive opinion justifying the general's expenditures and contracts but observed that "the exigencies of the department were such that much should be pardoned in one compelled to act so promptly and with so little at his command."⁵⁷ In reenforcing Lyon at Wilson's Creek, Frémont had acted as promptly and efficiently as his limited resources permitted.⁵⁸ The report naturally devoted the greatest emphasis to the famous proclamation issued by the general in 1861. "Whatever opinion may be entertained in reference to the time when the policy of emancipation should have been inaugurated, or by whose authority it should have been promulgated there can be no doubt that General Frémont at that early day rightly judged in regard to the most effective means of subduing this rebellion." The proof of his wisdom lay in the fact that Lincoln himself had since applied the same principle to all the rebellious states.⁵⁹ The report concluded that "the administration of General Frémont was eminently characterized by earnestness, ability, and the most unquestionable loyalty."⁶⁰

The Committee's broadside strengthened Frémont in public opinion and heartened the efforts of his political friends.⁶¹ The Radical press thundered demands that he and Butler, officers who really believed in emancipation, be assigned to important positions. Until this were done, all talk of the government's having a policy of freedom was "idiotic."⁶² When rumors spread that the administration would raise a large army of Negro freedmen, the Radicals eagerly suggested Frémont as the ideal commander.⁶³ Thaddeus Stevens hopefully wrote: "I learned from the President . . . that he was about to offer to the General the command of the negro army, which he hoped would soon be 100,000 strong. I hope Frémont may accept it, and beat all the white troops in action, and thereby acquire glory."⁶⁴ But the astute Lincoln was only fending off the Radicals with promises impossible to fulfill, and the Pathfinder remained without employment.

Convinced that Lincoln and the West Pointers meant to relegate him to obscurity, Frémont characteristically sought vindication in the political arena.

⁵⁷ *C. C. W.*, 1863, III, 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 6. This is a reference to the Emancipation Proclamation issued by Lincoln January 1, 1863.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6. Gooch and Odell refused to sign the report because the evidence was too scanty and inconclusive.

⁶¹ Bartlett, *Frémont*, 82; Brotherhead, *Frémont*, 5; C. A. Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War* (New York, 1898), 5.

⁶² *Boston Commonwealth*, in *Detroit Free Press*, April 23; *Detroit Advertiser and Tribune*, Chandler's organ, April 24.

⁶³ *New York Independent*, May 7, 20.

⁶⁴ Stevens, letter of June 9, Stevens MSS.

Early in 1864 he announced himself as a candidate for the presidency.⁶⁵ A motley convention of his supporters at Cleveland, shouting that a man of his military genius was needed at the helm, placed him in nomination. But his friends of the Committee, willing to push his military ambitions, would not go along in any movement that threatened to disrupt the Republican party and endanger its chances of victory in the coming election.⁶⁶ When it seemed that Frémont might take away enough votes from Lincoln to throw certain pivotal states into the Democratic column, Wade and Chandler decided that their one-time favorite must withdraw. They secured a promise from Lincoln to remove the Pathfinder's hated enemy, Montgomery Blair, from the Cabinet if Frémont would retire from the lists. The general sullenly accepted this arrangement.⁶⁷ And, although he lived for many years after the war, Frémont never again became a powerful factor in the military or political life of the nation.

Frémont was the only one of Lincoln's several "political" generals to receive a large, independent command. Perhaps the Pathfinder's audacious assumption of authority and his excursions into the political field discouraged the President from giving similar appointments to other civilians. The Committee's partisan support of Frémont and its constant efforts to advance his military fortunes was only one of its many interferences with the army. The entire conduct of the Civil War was shot through with such examples of political influence. Continually the military organization experienced the impact of the civilian branches of the government. Seemingly the American democracy of the sixties could carry on a war in no other way.

⁶⁵ Bartlett, *Frémont*, 89-90, 103; Nevins, *Frémont*, II, 658-659; *New York Evening Post*, May 25, 1864; *New York Tribune*, June 6.

⁶⁶ Clarke, *Julian*, 251; *Life of Chandler*, 266.

⁶⁷ W. R. Harbison, "Zachariah Chandler's Part in the Reelection of Abraham Lincoln," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXII (March, 1936), 267-276; *Life of Chandler*, 273-276; Nevins, *Frémont*, II, 664-665; Smith, *Blair Family*, II, 227-228.

THE FRENCH AND PRUSSIAN STAFF SYSTEMS BEFORE 1870

By Dallas D. Irvine

THE primary cause of the French military collapse in 1870 was previous reliance upon a vicious system for the education, promotion, and assignment of officers. This system was unable to suffocate all intellectual progress in the army, although it was marvelously suited for that purpose. But it was almost completely effective in excluding the army's brain power from the staff and high command. To the resulting lack of intelligence at the top can be ascribed all the inexcusable defects of French military policy.

While something similar may be said in the case of other great national failures in war, this was an extreme example. Moreover, it was the fate of the French system to be pitted against another which was a supreme example of military wisdom. Viewed in the light of the Prussian system, that of the French furnishes in its folly an incomparable lesson for all time.

By 1870 the Prussian chief of general staff occupied a position independent of the minister of war and, indeed, of the ministry in its entirety, being responsible only to the king. Since he was also prospectively the real commander-in-chief of the Prussian forces in any war, his position was an extraordinary strong one which has rarely been duplicated in other countries. Particularly important was the fact that the position was lasting, for this insured a long-time continuity of direction which, in countries with more democratic forms of government, has not been easily attained. Moltke himself was titular chief of the general staff for almost thirty-one years, and the position was held by only seven men for the period from 1821 to 1914.¹

The "Great General Staff" which worked under the immediate direction of the chief of general staff at Berlin underwent many changes of organization during the course of its history. In the period immediately before and after the Franco-Prussian War, however, it was organized in three numbered sections, four named sections, and a central office for the administration not only of the Great General Staff but the general staff establishment as a whole. The named sections were charged with more or less technical functions, while each of the numbered sections was in a sense a little general staff by itself for a particular "theater of war." The First Section occupied itself with countries north and east of Germany, including Austria; the Second Section with Germany itself, Switzerland, and Italy; the Third Section with countries to the west. This organization was one dictated by the peculiar conformation of Prussia and her position on the European map, with major powers on three sides and a variegated assortment of small states in her very bosom. It was not generally copied. It was also distinctly a peace-time organization,

¹ Eugène Stoffel, *Rapports militaires écrits de Berlin, 1866-1870* (Paris, 1871), 39 f., 42-44; Paul Bronsart von Schellendorf, *The Duties of the General Staff* (London, 1905), 27-29.

for the part of the Great General Staff which took the field with the king in 1870 was organized in three numbered sections for operations, communications, and intelligence respectively, with a "quartermaster-general" exercising general supervision as deputy of the chief of staff.

The four named sections of the Great General Staff were: the Military Historical Section, the Geographical-Statistical Section, the Topographical Section, and the Railway Section. A trigonometric section had already been segregated as the Triangulation Bureau and was shortly to be united with the topographical section and a cartographical section under a special Chief of the National Survey subordinate to the chief of staff. These particular sections were engaged in completing the map of Germany then in progress and, though reckoned officially to the Great General Staff, may be regarded, after 1875, as no longer constituting part of the capital staff proper, the work in which they were engaged being analogous to that of the Geological Survey in the United States or the Ordnance Survey in the United Kingdom. They are of interest here chiefly as they recall the earlier devotion of the general staff to cartographical activity in particular.²

The Military Historical Section, as its name implies, was charged with the compiling of official histories of earlier campaigns and such other historical studies as might be deemed of value, as well as with the keeping of the War Archive. The Geographical-Statistical Section was charged with providing maps and exhaustive geographical accounts of all foreign countries and with keeping them up to date. Lastly, but not least, the Railway Section was charged with the study of railways at home and abroad, supervision of civil construction so far as military considerations were involved, arrangement of troop transports in time of peace, the training of officers for railway staff duties, the preparation of the time-tables for the concentration of the army at the outbreak of war, and the management of traffic on home lines in time of war.³

For the handling of the railways in case of war an extensive organization was provided in addition to the Railway Section. In time of peace there was a Central Commission upon which the various interests concerned were represented and which was charged with considering ways and means of securing effective handling. It acted through an executive commission composed of an officer and a railway official. Similar commissions, each composed of an officer and a railway official, with subordinates, existed for each important "line" and division, with headquarters at an appropriate station. In time of peace these cooperated with

² See my article on "The Origin of Capital Staffs," *Journal of Modern History*, X (1938), 169 ff.

³ The foregoing exposition is based upon: August von Witzleben, *Heerwesen und Infanteriedienst der königlich preussischen Armee* (8th ed.; Berlin, 1864), 35 f.; Stoffel, 40-42; Ferdinand Baron Lüdinghausen gen. Wolff, *Organisation und Dienst der Kriegsmacht des deutschen Reiches* (2 vols.; Berlin, 1872), I, 98 f.; A. Froelich, *Die Verwaltung des deutschen Heeres* (2 vols.; Berlin, 1875), I, 292 f.; James M. Grierson, *The Armed Strength of the German Empire* (2nd ed., 2 vols.; London, 1888), I, 236-41, 298; Bronsart, 31-37.

the Railway Section in working out the local details of railway transport plans, and in time of war the military representative became the "commandant" of the line or division. In time of war higher special authorities were also provided. In the war of 1870-71 each field army had an inspector general of communications under whom a director of field railways exercised complete control over the army's own railway communication line through the proper line and district commandants.

This system for the control of railways was based upon two principles of utmost importance: first, the removal of the railways from the arbitrary jurisdiction of the lesser military commanders and the centering of control in the hands of a special hierarchy responsible only to the high command; second, the constitution of the operating commissions in every case of the appropriate railway official and a military officer trained in railway duties, so that both military needs and the proper functioning of the railways as such would be taken into sufficient consideration. By these means the smooth running of the complex and delicate railway system was safeguarded as it could not be in any other way. Upon this foundation all the exact arrangements for the immediate mobilization and concentration of a nation-in-arms heavily rested, for without complete reliability of execution through railway transport such plans for fast action on an enormous scale would have been infinitely worse than useless.⁴

Such, in outline, was the organization of the Great General Staff and the railway staff which served as its auxiliary. There were also, of course, the general staffs at corps and divisional headquarters, each engaged with the details of assigned parts in the national plan of action. Far more important than mere organization, however, was the level of ability of the staff personnel. This naturally depended, in considerable part, upon the quality of education and training provided, and here the key institution was the *Kriegsacademie*, or War College, from the graduates of which the general staff was almost entirely recruited. This was an institution for formal military education corresponding to the professional schools of the universities and intended to provide an officer with a thorough knowledge and understanding of the art of war in all its higher, as well as its lower, branches. Though the institution was not placed under direct control of the general staff until 1872, it was from the beginning the nursery of that staff.⁵

A training program carried on within the Great General Staff was intended to build, upon the basis of the knowledge acquired in the *Kriegsacademie*, a real skill in the performance of staff duties and in the higher conduct of war. To this end the program consisted in part of the actual exercise of staff duties in various sections of the Great General Staff and in part of the formal study of the conduct

⁴ Froelich, I, 113-22, 141-9; II, 541-8; Grierson, I, 299 f., 324-7; Edwin A. Pratt, *The Rise of Rail Power in War and Conquest, 1833-1914* (London, 1915), 103-21; Jean Colin, *The Transformations of War* (London, 1913), 317 f.

⁵ Froelich, I, 293-6; Bronsart, 45-48; "L'académie de guerre de Berlin," *Revue militaire de l'étranger*, I (1872), 116-9, 122-3.

of war by the case method, the only method by which it is possible to develop intellectual skill of a very high order. This case method was partly applied in the study of historical examples, but it received its highest application in hypothetical tactical exercises or war-games (*Kriegsspiele*), staff rides or journeys, and the large-scale autumn maneuvers—the first being conducted upon the map, the second upon the ground, and the third upon the ground with troops. It was by these means that actual war was closely simulated and a degree of skill developed which the French had not believed possible in an army that had not known a major war from 1815 to 1864.⁶

As important as this educational program proved to be, it was secondary in importance to a feature of the Prussian military system upon which most other elements of its superiority ultimately rested, namely, the system of advancement to and within the general staff. It is manifestly important to develop to the fullest the capabilities of officers who may be called upon to exercise the functions of higher command in war, but in the last analysis it is of far greater importance to insure that the officers selected for the exercise of those functions are the ones of greatest intellectual capacity in all the army. If there is any one element in the Prussian military system which serves to explain the relative efficiency of the army under Moltke, it is to be found in a method of selecting and advancing staff officers which was admirably designed to concentrate the best brain power of the army where it could do the most good. As might be surmised, this method, like the effective exploitation of rail power, was mainly a product of the genius of Moltke.⁷

The sifting process began with the admissions to the *Kriegsacademie*, which were by competitive examination and careful selection from among candidates having at least three years service as officers and usually considerably more. Out of an average of 120-150 or more candidates only 40 (somewhat later, 50) were granted admission. At the end of the three years course these officers were returned to regimental duty, but after about a year 12 (later 20) of the best—less than half the class—were called up and attached for from one to two years to the Great General Staff at Berlin, where they received training in the functions of various sections as well as more formal instruction from the chief of staff, who kept them under close observation. Sometimes officers of promise who had not entered the *Kriegsacademie* were also called up for this probationary period. At the end all were returned to regimental duty, whence, after a short time, those selected for appointment to the general staff were again called up and commissioned captains ahead of their time.

After about two years of general staff service, usually at the headquarters of a corps or division, these captains were again returned to service with troops, with loss of status as general staff officers. After a further two years, however, those

⁶ Grierson, II, 162-4; "Voyages d'études," *Journal des sciences militaires*, 10^e sér., V (1900), 439-51.

⁷ Wilhelm Bigge, *Feldmarschall Graf Moltke* (2 vols.; Munich, 1901), II, 37 f.

who had lived up to expectations were reappointed to the general staff with the grade of major, some seven or eight years ahead of other officers who had been commissioned originally at about the same time. Similarly, before receiving each later promotion, each officer had to return to the command of troops for at least one year, and if he had not proven satisfactory as a staff officer he could always be culled out at this time by simply not recalling him to the general staff. From this repeated return to service with troops, however, there was exempted a certain proportion of the officers of the Great General Staff who, for their highly specialized and distinguished scientific attainments, were indispensable to the best functioning of that organ and the training of staff personnel there. These officers were carried indefinitely, therefore, upon a special "subsidiary establishment" of the staff. The general system was thus not allowed to prevent the retention of necessary specialists.⁸

The significant features of this system were as follows: first, the rapid advancement and great likelihood of attaining high rank furnished a powerful incentive for the best officers to seek the arduous career of the staff officer; second, the staff officers were drawn from the best material in the whole army, with opportunity open to all younger officers; third, the repeated return of the officers to command of troops, besides insuring that they did not lose their sense of realities, allowed the elimination of deadwood at every stage and kept the staff officers under the constant necessity of giving the very best that was in them; fourth, the large number of officers who had received advanced training but who had been returned temporarily or indefinitely to service with troops furnished not only a great reservoir from which competent staff officers could be drawn in case of war-time expansion but an intellectual haven for the whole army in time of peace; fifth, the higher ranks of the staff were filled with relatively young and vigorous men from whom relatively young and vigorous generals could be drawn. In combination with the Prussian practise of reposing great power in the hands of the younger chiefs of staff, the system was far superior to any other that has ever been devised for the mobilization of military brain power.

If the system of selection which has just been described was, through the general staff of the army, the foundation of Prussian military greatness in these times, reliance upon an almost opposite system was the quicksand which underlay the military structure of France and the principal cause of her undoing in 1870, for France was not lacking in machinery homologous to that of the Prussian staff system—not excluding a rudimentary capital staff.

Under the old régime the French system of staff-and-command had been unequalled in all Europe. According to the scheme of war-time organization laid down by Louvois, the chief of staff of an army was the *maréchal-général des logis*, or quartermaster-general. Second to him, if not entirely subordinate, was a *major-général (de l'infanterie)*, later to usurp the first place, and quartermasters-general of the cavalry. There might also be a *major-général* of the dragoons. Each of

⁸ Stoffel, 115-24; Wolff, I, 70; Bronsart, 32, 36 f.; Grierson, I, 237; II, 15, 48-52.

these officers had one or more deputies or aides and such other assistance as might be necessary. High social rank not being an indispensable qualification, the principal staff offices were particularly open to talent, so that numerous instances are found of able chiefs of staff contributing largely to the accomplishments of army commanders, the most notable instance being that of Bourcet, chief of staff to Maillebois and De Broglie.⁹

These staff offices were supposed to exist only in time of war, for only in time of war was there any organization above the regiment, but in the case of the *maréchaux-généraux des logis* there was a growing tendency in the eighteenth century to maintain such employments for special purposes in time of peace. After 1783 there was also a regular establishment of staff officers below general rank. This was the *corps de l'état-major de l'armée* under the Marquis d'Aguesseau, in which the highest grade was that of *aide-major-général*.

Something similar took place in the case of the special staff of *ingénieurs géographes*, the beginnings of which are particularly associated with the name of Vauban. These geographical engineers, unlike the regular officers of the army, were supposed to be men of scientific attainments, or what passed for scientific attainments at that time. They were charged particularly with mapping and reconnaissance but were also employed for the direction of marches and encampments. The advantage of having a body of such specialists in an age of inadequate maps is obvious. Regular military status for the *ingénieurs géographes* dates from 1716.¹⁰

The crown upon the old French staff system was a true capital staff or "great general staff" organized by Lieutenant-General Pierre Bourcet in 1766 and eventually designated as the *service d'état-major des logis des armées*. In its organization the most important principles which later governed the "metabolism" of Moltke's staff were anticipated. Particular care was given to sifting for the highest available ability, not only in the initial selection but by means of several stages of probationary work, upon which examinations were given. A poor showing in these might mean return to the line. Special pay and advancement attracted ability and furnished a strong incentive to the officers on trial. The officers specialized upon particular portions of the frontiers, to which they would be assigned in case of war. Most interesting, however, is the fact that the higher training was by a thoroughgoing application of the case method in drawing up and working out all the details of plans to meet supposed concrete situations on ground with which the officer had made himself thoroughly familiar.¹¹

Bourcet's capital staff was abolished in 1771, after the fall of the Choiseul ministry, but reconstituted in 1783 as the *corps d'état-major de l'armée* already

⁹ Léon Hennet, *Régards en arrière; études d'histoire militaire sur le XVIII^e siècle: l'état-major* (Paris, 1911), 23, 146-74; Charles Thoumas, *Les transformations de l'armée française* (2 vols.; Paris, 1887), I, 187-91.

¹⁰ Hennet, 189-91; *Le spectateur militaire*, 4^e sér., XXXVI (1874), 57-87; Henri Berthaut, *Les ingénieurs géographes militaires, 1624-1831* (2 vols.; Paris, 1902), I, 6, 13, 15 f., 17-116 *passim*.

¹¹ Hennet, 23-41, 52-56, 61 f., 66-71, 95-122.

mentioned. On the whole the French system of staff-and-command was far in advance of the Prussian in the later decades of the old régime. In fact, the French were at this time far in advance of other countries in most things military, above all in their comprehension of the current development of the art of war. It is a period which glitters with distinguished military thinkers and doers if the dazzling light of the subsequent Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars is screened off—Saxe, Bourcet, Guibert, the Du Teil, De Broglie, Gribeauval, Montalembert, St. Germain, etc. From this high state of advancement the Revolution brought a retrogression in many ways which was not made up until the nineteenth century was nearly run.¹²

The spirit of progress and innovation with which the Revolution began led in 1790-91 to the adoption of a new and not injudicious scheme for staff service providing for *adjutants-généraux* and periodic return to command of troops. The political turmoil and desperate wars which shortly followed, however, were not favorable to its proper application and development. Under the existing conditions war had to be a matter of makeshifts, and success turned many of these makeshifts into habits that were to prove pernicious in the long run. Of particularly important consequence was the way in which officers rose to high command.¹³

Promotion by merit is practically unavoidable in the case of any long, hard war, but in the Revolutionary Wars the necessity was made extreme by the insufficiency of competent officers of higher rank as the result of emigration, political purgings, and the great expansion of the army. Higher commanders had to be hurriedly selected from the lower ranks, therefore, on the basis of ability demonstrated, or prestige acquired, in the actual conduct of war. Success was the great criterion. The men who were successful, however, were those who were able to get along without efficient staffs—who acted largely as their own staffs. For capable staff officers were mostly lacking, not only because of the deficiency of trained officers but because the abler men available were needed for command. The commanders thus learned to perform for themselves all the more important functions of command without assistance other than from clerks and gallopers, relying mainly upon their own innate ability rather than upon conscious and systematic method.¹⁴

¹² *Ibid.*, 82-145; Spenser Wilkinson, *The French Army before Napoleon* (Oxford, 1915), 72-98; Jean Colin, *L'éducation militaire de Napoléon* (Paris, 1900), 32-103.

¹³ Decrees of Oct. 5 and Nov. 18, 1790; *Journal militaire* (Paris, 1790-1842), 28 f., 353-55; Instruction of June 1, 1791; *ibid.*, 1791, 2^e partie, pp. 386-9; Thoumas, I, 191-201; Eugène Riff, *Histoire de l'ex-corporis d'état-major* (Paris, 1881), 8-13.

¹⁴ Decrees of Sept. 23 and Nov. 18, 1790; *Journal militaire*, 1790, pp. 260-5, 268-75, 353-5; Decree of Aug. 1, 1791; *ibid.*, 1791, 2^e partie, pp. 376-9; Decrees of Apr. 10 and Nov. 8, 1792; *ibid.*, 1792, 1^{re} partie, pp. 201-3; 2^e partie, pp. 538 f.; Decree of Feb. 21, 1793; *ibid.*, 1793, 1^{re} partie, pp. 141-4; Law of 1^{re} Thermidor An II (July 19, 1794); *ibid.*, An II, 2^e partie, pp. 855 f.; Law of 14^e Germinal An III (Apr. 3, 1795); *ibid.*, An III, 2^e partie, pp. 791-806; Law of 15^e Vendémiaire An IV (Oct. 7, 1795); *ibid.*, An IV, 1^{re} partie, p. 65; Constitution of 22^e Frimaire An VII (Dec. 13, 1799); Jean B. Duvergier *et al.* (ed.), *Collection complète des lois . . .* (30 vols. and annual vol.; Paris, 1834 *et seq.*), XII, 20-30 (art. 41);

This state of affairs once established, it tended to remain fixed, for it accorded with the engrossing tendencies of strong and able characters and was crowned with a record of brilliant achievement, while trained staff officers were still unprovided. An unfortunate conception of command as the function of a single individual and of generalship as an unteachable individual gift or acquisition was the result—a conception which continued to dominate in the French service down through the Franco-Prussian War, particularly as it was quite suited to the primitive type of warfare in Algeria which served as the principal school of the French army. It was more or less sufficient, also, for the various small-scale wars and expeditions against backward powers or peoples in which the French engaged in the period 1815-1870, and the total result was that no *need* was felt for highly organized division of labor in exercising the functions of command. For assisting in the exercise of those functions, therefore, the staff of a higher commander continued to be made up of clerks and dispatch riders, secretaries and companions, masquerading under the names of staff officer, chief of staff, and aide-de-camp—with perhaps a topographical officer and attached officers of artillery and engineers in time of war.¹⁵

Since the duties of such functionaries were more physical than intellectual, more personal than military, special qualifications were not absolutely requisite, and during Revolutionary and Napoleonic times the positions were filled very largely by mediocre or incompetent favorites. The evil of this was impressed upon the methodical mind of Marshal Gouvion Saint-Cyr, especially as such favoritism threatened to go beyond all bounds of reason under the Restoration, so that when he became minister of war for the second time, in 1817, he set about to insure the competence of staff officers by establishing a distinct *corps d'état-major* (1818) which was to be composed only of specially trained officers and from which all staff officers, even aides-de-camp, were to be drawn. Since he was concerned primarily with eliminating incompetent favorites, it was natural for him to make this a closed corps and to provide for its proper training in a special school, the *Ecole d'application d'état-major* at Paris. For the accomplishment of his purpose, this was a system well conceived, but it should be noticed that his purpose was the remedying of a crying abuse rather than the providing of a system of sifting out and exploiting to the utmost the best brains in the army.¹⁶

Thoumas, I, 416-20; René Tournès, "Le G. Q. G. de Napoléon Ier," *Revue de Paris*, May 1, 1921, p. 152 f.; Jules Lewal, *Etudes de guerre: partie organique* (Paris, 1873), 13; Ramsay W. Phipps, *The Armies of the First French Republic* (3 vols.; London, 1926-35), I, 11-29.

¹⁵ Thomas J. Thackeray, *The Military Organization and Administration of France* (2 vols.; London, 1856), I, 27-9; Hugues Jarras, *Souvenirs du général Jarras* (Paris, 1892), pp. vi f., 366-8; Max Szczepanski, *Napoleon III und sein Heer* (Heidelberg, 1913), 77; Thoumas, I, 206; V. D., "Guerre de 1870," *Le spectateur militaire*, XXIII (1871), 70 f.; Max Jähns, *Das französische Heer von der grossen Revolution bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1873), 434-8; André Vauchelle, *Cours d'administration militaire* (4th ed., 3 vols.; Paris, 1861), III, 20-22; Lewal, 6 f., 10 f.

¹⁶ Riff, 8 f.; Thoumas, I, 198-201; Ordinance of May 6, 1818; *Journal militaire*, 1818, 1^{er} semestre, 357-64.

The Restoration, however, was a period of a good deal of military wisdom in France, for there were too many men who had perceived at first hand the evils of the military system under Napoleon. In almost every department of military affairs measures of great promise were adopted. It is not surprising, therefore, that in 1826 the staff system was altered for the better. In the first place, all graduates of the staff school were now sent to regimental duty and the necessary staff officers were selected on a competitive basis from among those who had there attained the grade of captain. Staff captains, moreover, upon being promoted from that grade, were required to serve in the line again before they could receive a second promotion. Particularly promising, however, was the establishment of a *comité consultatif d'état-major* which was charged with assigning exercises to staff officers, with classifying the officers according to the merit of these *travaux*, and in general with looking after the better instruction of the corps.¹⁷

The promise of this law of 1826 was made illusory by measures of the miserable July Monarchy. In 1831 the corps of *ingénieurs géographes* was assimilated to the staff corps with the evil result that the latter was diverted from its more proper duties to continuation of work upon the exact and detailed map of France begun in 1817. This work upon *la carte*, with its extra pay and seasons of drafting in Paris, was for a long time considered a sinecure very much to be desired, and its relatively mechanical nature bred intellectual sloth of the worst kind. Moreover, the magnitude of this great project was such as to consume an altogether undue proportion of the staff's energies.¹⁸

The July Monarchy also threw itself into the Algerian adventure, with the result that the French army acquired an unfortunate orientation upon the experiences of primitive colonial warfare. The melodrama and petty glories of this warfare, and the possibilities of advancement for actions of *éclat*, absorbed the attention of those staff officers too dynamic to relish cartographical labors. But of worst effect were the provisions of a new staff law passed in 1833, a law whose basic arrangements remained in effect down to the Franco-Prussian War. Though an examining board was preserved by this law and *travaux* still prescribed, the graduates of the staff school were once more appointed permanently to staff service. Two-thirds of the promotions to the grades of lieutenant and captain, and one-half of those to the next higher grade, were to be by seniority, the small remainder of promotions in the corps being left to selection, which was supposed to be based in part, at least, on the classification of the officers made by the examining board each year. Exchanges with officers of other arms were to be allowed, but in practise these rarely took place, and in 1838 the privilege was withdrawn as far as the staff corps was concerned, so that the corps became a tightly closed one.

¹⁷ Ordinance of Dec. 10, 1826; *ibid.*, 1826, 2^e semestre, pp. 606-12; Lewal, 13; A. M. Delavoye, "The French Staff," *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, XXXV (1891), 1128.

¹⁸ Riff, 44-51; Gabriel Chamberet, "La carte de France et les autres travaux du Dépôt de la guerre," *Revue contemporaine*, XXIX (1856), 169-81; Théodore Fix, *Souvenirs d'un officier d'état-major, 1846-1870* (Paris, 1898), 223-5.

The only process of selection for the corps, therefore, was the competitive examination for entrance to the staff school, and this came at a time when the aspirants were immature, candidacy being open only to the student second-lieutenants of St.-Cyr, the second lieutenants of the army, and a few students of the *Ecole polytechnique*.¹⁹

The training provided in the school was of quite different order than that given in the *Kriegsacademie*, as is indicated by the difference in names. The course lasted only two years, was addressed to more immature and less experienced students, and was intended to train them in the routine and semi-mechanical duties of the French staff officer rather than to prepare them for the exercise of all the higher intellectual functions of command. The great pride of the school was its training in draughting—the making of maps and beautiful if fantastic plans of fortifications. At the end of the course the young officers were sent to service with troops of several different arms for some four or five years—the first and only service with troops they were ever required to perform. Subsequently they served as staff officers and aides-de-camp until they were retired or attained general rank with appropriate command. The needs of the staff service, however, required many captains, about one-third as many *chefs d'escadron*, and few officers of higher rank. Since promotion was only within the corps, mostly by seniority and otherwise by favor or opportunity for distinguished conduct under fire, advancement was slow—exceedingly slow—in the rule. This put a damper on ambition, while security of position encouraged laziness, so that the system fostered intellectual lethargy about as well as any that could have been devised. The staff officer who studied his profession was a rare exception—hadn't one's studies been completed in the school, and wasn't the art of higher command after all a matter of individual genius and momentary inspiration? As for the *travaux* supposed to be assigned, these amounted to nothing more than the preparation of a map of some area accompanied by a descriptive memoir—a copy-book exercise of little intellectual value and bearing principally upon the cartographical and geographical work of the staff.²⁰

No effort was made to train officers in the higher conduct of war by systematic exercises of any sort, let alone those employing the case methods of the Prussians.

¹⁹ Jähns, 326-32; Vauchelle, I, 20-23; Ordinance of Feb. 23, 1833, *Journal militaire officiel* (édition refondue, 14 vols. and index; Paris 1872), II, 184-91; Ordinance of Mar. 16, 1838; *ibid.*, II, 374 (art. 56).

²⁰ Ordinance of May 6, 1818; *loc. cit.*, p. 362 (art. 36); Law of Apr. 14, 1832; *Journal militaire officiel* (éd. refondue), II, 25-28 (arts. 12-14, 19); Ordinances of Feb. 23, 1833, and Mar. 16, 1838; *ibid.*, II, 184-91; III, 359-461 (arts. 33, 40, 43, 133); Decree of Apr. 12, 1852; *ibid.*, V, 376; Instruction of July 15, 1853; *ibid.*, V, 637-42; undated instruction reproduced in Victor Saussine, *Dictionnaire de législation et d'administration militaires* (3 vols.; Paris, 1867-70), I, 1152-4, 1168-75 [art. 3: "Si une aptitude spéciale le porte vers les sciences, c'est principalement à la géodésie et ses applications qu'il doit consacrer ses études."]; Thoumas, I, 202 f.; Vauchelle, I, 136-41; Riff, 119-21; Jähns, 418-29; Szczepanski, 96 f.; Stoffel, 27; Lewal, 14; Louis Trochu, *Oeuvres Posthumes* (2 vols.; Tours, 1896), II, 228 f.

There were no war games, no staff rides, no real maneuvers of larger units—the seasonal camps such as that of Châlons having only a minor training value in spite of the pride that was taken in them. Even the study of military history was discouraged by the regulation forbidding officers to publish any writings whatever without special permission from the minister of war. This was given, if at all, only after submission of their manuscripts to a rigorous censorship which cut out anything that might appear to reflect in any way upon the existing system. It is hardly a matter for wonder, therefore, that the French military mind was not as progressive in this period as the German; the wonder is that it was not more stupid than it was, for in spite of the system there was still some creditable military thought in France.²¹

The Second Empire continued the staff system of the July Monarchy while further ensuring eventual disaster by fostering the legend of French military superiority. Only at the very end, after the terrible portent of Sadowa had somewhat shaken French complacency, were some poor measures of reform allowed to be projected by Marshal Niel. One of his last accomplishments was a decree establishing the principle that more second lieutenants of the army should thereafter be admitted to the staff school than would be required for staff service after graduation. Those not needed were to be sent back to their regiments with the designation of *adjoints d'état-major* after having served for two years with another arm. Exchanges were to be allowed in the lower grades between these officers and regular officers of the staff corps, so that staff officers who found staff duties distasteful could transfer to the line. In time of war the *adjoints* could be called upon for staff service, the body of such officers thus constituting a staff reserve. At the same time it was expected that the dissemination of such officers in the line in time of peace would raise the very low educational level there and stimulate a taste for study. This was a progressive scheme on the whole but one which required a good many years to be of much effect. As it was, Niel's successor administered chloroform, almost before the scheme could be given any application, by reducing the number of admissions to the staff school—which Niel had materially raised for 1870—to less than what it had been before!²²

In the *Dépôt de la guerre* the French had an organ homologous to the Prussian Great General Staff. Originating as a war archive in the seventeenth century, with which a collateral map archive had been conjoined in the eighteenth century, this organ had been intelligently organized by the Restoration as the headquarters of the staff corps. But the evils which afflicted that corps as a whole were magnified in their effect upon the *Dépôt*, depriving it of intellectual substance and deteriorating its earlier organic complexion. In the later years of the Second Empire it was organized in two *bureaux*, with a special conservator for the archives and library

²¹ Jähns, 429-33; Fix, 229, 245; Circulars of July 17, 1835, and Feb. 26, 1841; *Journal militaire officiel* (éd. refondue), II, 741; IV, 7; Ministerial note of May 3, 1853; *ibid.*, v. 582; Edouard Guillon, *Nos écrivains militaires* (2 vols.; Paris, 1898-99), II, 275-357.

²² Report and decree of July 19, 1869, in Saussine, I, 1142-6; Riff, 200.

(Camille Rousset). The First Bureau was charged with cartography; the Second Bureau with historical work, the collection of military information, and the maintenance of the central map files.²³

Marshal Niel successfully endeavored to revivify the Dépôt by drawing into it the abler officers of the staff corps under General Hugues Jarras and focussed its fresh energies upon intensive study of the Prussian enemy. Between 1867 and 1870 it made truly extraordinary progress in the exercise of capital staff functions, but time was too short for its influence to make any appreciable headway against the obstinate benightedness of the French army and government, particularly since it continued to be an auxiliary organ not accorded by either enactment or custom the function of participating regularly in the determination of military questions. Its work at this time took effect mainly after the catastrophe, when it enabled the Dépôt to develop rapidly and produce the modern French staff system.²⁴

The evils of the old system of staff-and-command were manifested in 1870 in the tragic helplessness of the regular military hierarchy in the face of the Germans. Criticism of the French officers for their ineffectiveness in the opening campaigns of this war, however, would be largely misdirected, for with some exceptions they did the best they knew how and very bravely. The cause of their difficulties was insufficient preparation for war of the proper sort in time of peace, particularly intellectual preparation. For failing to provide for proper preparation the military authorities of many years had been especially to blame, yet their neglect was in turn due mainly to the fact that they were themselves products of a system which did not provide for the continual sifting out, higher education, and maximum exploitation of the best brains of the army. Normally this circle would have been broken by the insight or enlightenment of exceptional individuals, but this escape was practically shut off by internal political considerations affecting the army and by the narcotic effect of the unconscious and hence almost unassailable belief that command was unavoidably the function of a single individual and a matter of esoteric inspiration rather than skill perfected through formal training. This state of affairs, it should be emphasized, was the result of the accidents of earlier circumstances and not of any innate deficiency of mind, as the brilliance of French military thought in other times and other respects amply shows.²⁵

²³ Joseph Vallongue, "Notice historique sur le Dépôt général de la guerre," *Mémorial topographique et militaire* (7 vols.; Paris, 1803-10), II, 1-41; D. Huguenin, "Les archives anciennes du Dépôt de la guerre," *Le spectateur militaire*, 4^e sér., XXII (1870), 5-40; "Le Dépôt de la guerre et les ingénieurs géographes," *ibid.*, XXV (1874), 57-88, 205-30; Chamberet, 169-81; Regulation of Jan. 31, 1822; *Journal militaire*, 1822, 1^{er} semestre pp. 144 f.; *Annuaire militaire de l'Empire française*, 1866, pp. 12 f.

²⁴ Jarras, 1-75; Fix, 236-46; Rapport de la sous-commission chargée de rechercher les améliorations qu'il serait possible de réaliser en ce qui concerne l'armée, n. d.; in *La nouvelle revue*, Feb. 1, 1912, p. 296; Fix, *Souvenirs d'un officier d'état-major*, 1870-1894 (Paris, 1899), 105-29.

²⁵ Cf. Bugeaud to Louis Philippe, June 3, 1846; *Memoirs of Marshal Bugeaud, 1784-1840* (2 vols.; London, 1884), II, 321 n.; Thoumas, I, 203; Lewal, 5-7; Barthélemy Palat, *Histoire de la guerre de 1870-1871* (7 vols.; Paris, 1901-08), II, 68 f.

WILSON'S CAVALRY CAMPAIGN OF 1865

By Major Elbridge Colby

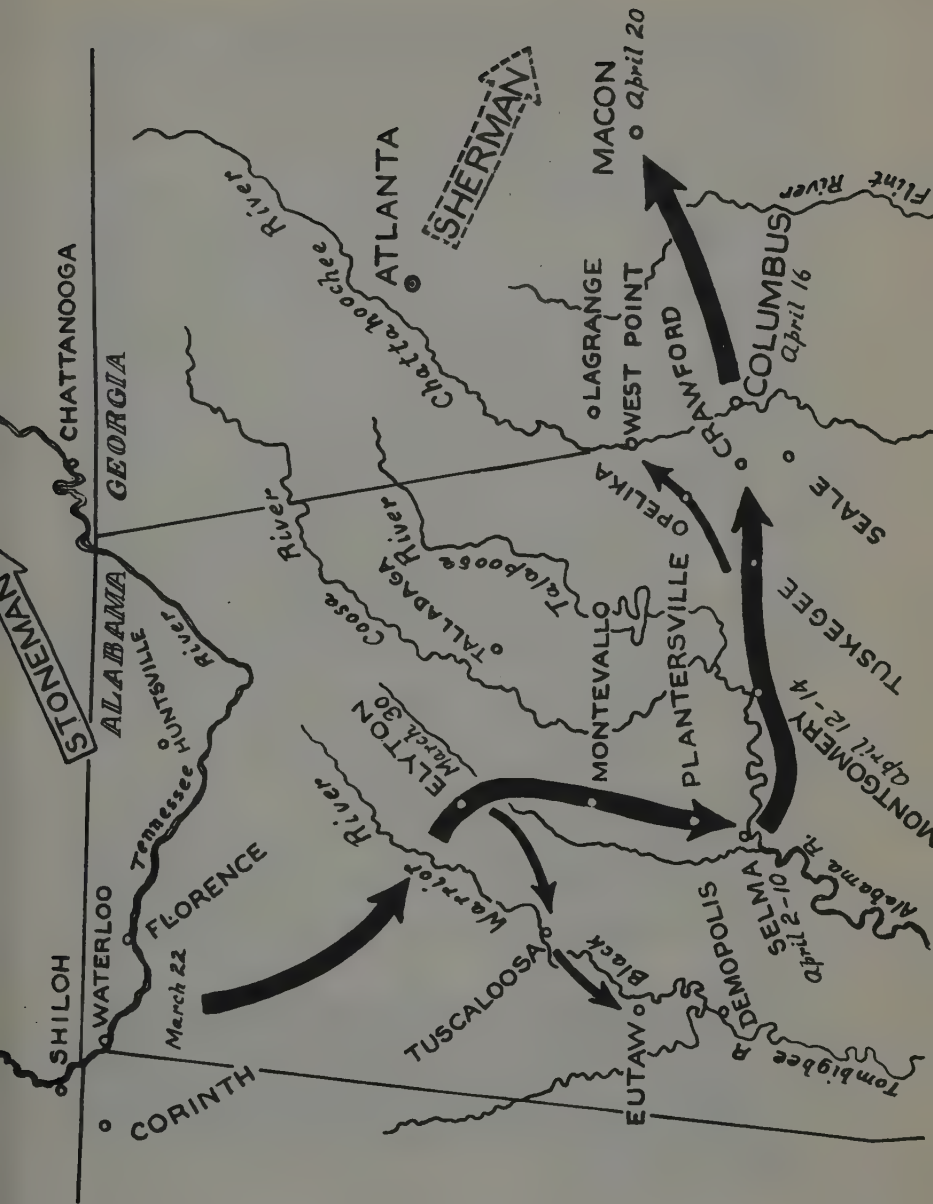
IN THE field, mere facility of military movement is not sufficient. There must be power, or rather momentum, which implies both motion and weight, the components of a real striking force. An excellent example of this military momentum can be found in James Harrison Wilson's cavalry campaign through Alabama to Columbus, Georgia, during the last weeks of the American Civil War. Significant as it was, this campaign has been neglected by historians and by European critics it has been almost completely overlooked, although George T. Denison called it "one of the most extraordinary affairs in the history of the cavalry service."¹ Its lessons were not appreciated. During the last half of the nineteenth century foreign armies were still talking of "shock action" and developing sword-wielding curassiers and spear-carrying lancers. For fifty years the clearly demonstrated value of mounted riflemen in the mass was unobserved.

Neglect of the record of these operations was perhaps due to the fact that the Alabama campaign lay outside both the Virginia theater and Sherman's turning movement from the South during the winter of 1864-1865. In a tactical sense, it was not in the logical sequence of events. Writers, eager to pursue their main themes, would not pause to note this apparent diversion, despite its great military importance.

The American Civil War—if Bunker Hill and New Orleans had not done so before—demonstrated at Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, and Malvern Hill the immense defensive power of modern firearms. Against such weapons the cavalry charge became increasingly costly and futile. In this respect the war marked the end of one epoch and the beginning of another. It was at this turning point, that General Wilson took twelve thousand horsemen, armed with the most modern fighting weapons, on his remarkable campaign of conquest. The operations which ensued utilized to the utmost firepower and mobility, weight of force and speed of movement. They assisted in bringing to surrender a people whose cause was already lost and whose morale had been gravely shaken by four years of bitter warfare.

At the beginning of the year 1865 Grant has pressed Lee closely against Richmond while Sherman campaigned against the Confederate rear. The latter came down out of Chattanooga across the mountain ranges to take Atlanta (September 1864), and swept through to Savannah (December 1864). He drove relentlessly on Columbia, South Carolina (February 1865) and Fayetteville (March 11, 1865). In his rear Sherman left Hood's Confederates; but he also left Thomas. Hood, who had been tampering with Sherman's supplies from Chattanooga to Atlanta, struck straight north as soon as Sherman started for Savannah and the

¹ George T. Denison, *A History of Cavalry from Earliest Times* (London, 1913), 386; see also Southern Historical Society, *Papers*, XXI (1893), 266 and XXIV (1896), 309.



sea. He promptly began his campaign for invading Tennessee and threatening Cincinnati. But the imperturbable Thomas collected a "hodge-podge" army at Nashville, and, in one of the most perfect operations of the war and in the following pursuit, practically destroyed Hood's army. That ill-starred force disintegrated. Parts of it turned up here and there, but its unity and strength were totally shattered in the last two weeks of December, 1864.

Such was the situation when Grant began to plan for the final blows of 1865. Sherman was to come up from Georgia, wreak retribution on South Carolina, destroy Lee's supply lines, and keep off Johnston. No substantial Confederate forces seemed to exist west of the Alleghenies, so that the blows there could be made at enemy resources and of course against such enemy resistance as should be found. Early in February Grant directed Stoneman with the IV Corps to move through eastern Tennessee and Knoxville, to penetrate North Carolina and to cut existing railroads. General Canby was to operate from New Orleans on Mobile.² At the same time Grant told Thomas to "prepare a cavalry expedition 10,000 strong" to drive into Alabama, and to demolish the ordnance works at Tuscaloosa and Selma. Thomas picked General Wilson, gave him orders to take Montgomery, and then to be prepared to operate towards the Mississippi or Mobile or Macon, "as circumstances might demand."³ Grant had some idea that this thrust would aid Canby but it was also designed to "destroy military resources." Indeed, instructions to Canby said that after Mobile was taken Canby should move on and destroy war materials at Montgomery and Selma. In other words, whichever commander moved the faster should do the job; cooperation could wait on events when and if the two forces neared one another in the field.

A great deal of Civil War cavalry activity was confined to mere raiding. When not occupied in protecting the front and flanks of the army, horse units—and notably those of the Confederacy—were off on independent jaunts that were little more than political raids. Such cavalry raids were spectacular indeed; and Stuart's long ride before Gettysburg is typical of their general uselessness.⁴ Wilson's cavalry force, however, was not to stage a raid, but to act as an invading army.⁵ Rapid movement, traveling light, was the essence of his campaign. Grant had learned the lesson when he was living on the country coming back to Holly

² *War of the Rebellion. A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1881-1901), Series I, XLIX, Part i, 342. Hereinafter cited as *O. R.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Sweeping raids, with much the same objectives as Wilson had in mind, were made earlier in the war by many others in the southwest. For instance, in little more than one month (March 16, 1864 to April 20, 1864) Forrest marched and fought from Columbus, Miss., via Jackson, Tenn., Union City, Tenn., Paducah, Ky., Fort Pillow, Tenn., Jackson, Tenn., Abbeville, Miss., to Okolona, Miss. He killed about 4,000 Federals; captured over 1,200 men, 800 horses, 5 pieces of artillery, thousands of small arms, and destroyed millions of dollars worth of property. A large force of infantry was stationed in Memphis but like Wilson, his was another objective.

⁵ Denison, *op. cit.*, 386.

Springs and Memphis. He had taught it to Sherman while sweeping southeast and inland of Vicksburg in 1863. Sherman, once over his amazement, himself applied the principle during his advance from Chattanooga and in his march on Savannah in 1864. The army was to see it again exemplified in striking form in Wilson's effort.

Grant did not depend alone on general competence and understanding. His instructions from City Point, dated February 14, directed Thomas to "prepare as much of a cavalry force" as he could, to "destroy military resources" and to "destroy or capture forces brought into the field" against the invader.⁶ In addition, wrote the Lieutenant General,

Tuscaloosa and Selma probably would be the points to direct the expedition against. This however would not be so important as the mere fact of penetrating deep into Alabama. Discretion should be left with the officer commanding the expedition. Your cavalry should go with as little wagon train as possible, relying upon the country for supplies. I would also reduce the number of guns to a battery, or the number of batteries, and put the extra teams to the guns taken. No guns or caissons should start with less than eight horses.

When these ideas were transmitted to the energetic Wilson, he made preparations to move "as lightly and rapidly as possible."⁸ While trying to find 10,000 broken-down horses previously put to pasturage near Louisville, and 7,000 elsewhere, he planned to "move with as few wheels as possible," to use pack mules as well as wagons and strictly to limit rations. General Hatch, he reported to Thomas, had "generously stripped his command of every Spencer carbine and horse" to fit out one of the divisions.⁹ The force was collected, reorganized, equipped, and drilled in the northwestern pocket of Alabama on the Tennessee River, near Waterloo and between Gravelly Springs and Florence. Its organization was as follows:

CAVALRY CORPS, MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSISSIPPI

Major General James H. Wilson, Commanding

Escort: 4th United States Cavalry, Lt. William O'Connell

FIRST DIVISION

Brig. Gen. Edward M. McCook

First Brigade

Brig. Gen. John H. Croxton

8th Iowa

4th Kentucky Infantry (mounted)

6th Kentucky

2d Michigan

Second Brigade

Colonel Oscar H. LaGrange

2d Indiana (battalion)

4th Indiana

4th Kentucky

7th Kentucky

1st Wisconsin

⁶ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 708, Grant's letter makes it clear that he appreciated the weakened condition of the Confederacy and that he anticipated the great demoralizing effect Wilson's movement would have on citizens and small garrisons in Alabama.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 708, 727.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 909; Wilson's General Order 24, March 18, 1865, quoted in Lyman B. Pierce, *History of the 2d Iowa Cavalry* (Burlington, Iowa, 1865), 163.

¹⁰ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 799, 402.

Artillery

Indiana Light, 18th Battery
(128 officers, 3,568 enlisted men)

SECOND DIVISION

Brig. Gen. Eli Long (wounded April 2)

Colonel Robert H. G. Minty

First Brigade (mounted infantry)

Colonel Abram O. Miller (wounded April 2)

Colonel Jacob G. Vail

Lt. Col. Frank White

98th Illinois

123d Illinois

17th Indiana

72d Indiana

Second Brigade

Colonel Robert H. G. Minty

Lt. Col. Horace N. Howland

4th Michigan

3d Ohio

4th Ohio

7th Pennsylvania

Artillery

Illinois Light, Chicago Board of Trade Battery
(172 officers, 4,586 enlisted men)

FOURTH DIVISION

Brevet Major General Emory Upton

First Brigade

Brevet Brig. Gen. Edward F. Winslow

3d Iowa

4th Iowa

10th Missouri

Second Brigade

Brevet Brig. Gen. Andrew J. Alexander

5th Iowa

1st Ohio

7th Ohio

Artillery

4th United States, Battery I
(113 officers, 3,180 enlisted men)

Denison described this body of troops as a force that

Consisted of 12,000 horsemen, with artillery and 1,500 dismounted men to guard the trains, and to be mounted as fast as horses could be obtained. Everything that could give mobility to this column had been considered. Every trooper carried five days light rations in haversacks, twenty-four pounds of grain, 100 rounds of ammunition, two extra horseshoes. Pack animals carried five days extra rations of hard bread, and ten of coffee, twenty of sugar, fifteen of salt. Eighty rounds of extra ammunition were carried in the wagon train. The supply train numbered only 250 wagons.¹¹

On March 11 a review was staged as evidence of the corps' readiness for advance, a review at which, it was said, there were "no ladies present, no newspaper correspondents, and not a member of Congress within a hundred miles."¹² Previously worn down by the pursuit of Hood and Forrest, Wilson's cavalry had been hurriedly worked into shape again. On the thirteenth of March he sent his last letters off to Thomas and Sherman. Ahead of him, said a headquarters clerk, was "a country of rivers, mountain streams flowing by stately pine woods, through hemlock-bordered ravines, some clear and colorless, others shaded blue and green," occasionally falling in beautiful cascades.¹³ But the Tennessee was high and Wilson could not cross until the eighteenth.¹⁴ Thereafter the going was difficult.

¹¹ Denison, *op. cit.*, 383-84; W. F. Scott, *Story of a Cavalry Regiment* (n. p., n. d.), 428.

¹² *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 908.

¹³ Quoted in F. N. Gilpin, "The Last Campaign—A Cavalryman's Journal," in *The Cavalry Journal*, XVIII (1908), 617-25.

¹⁴ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 356.

Roads were soft and sticky with mud; small streams were swollen; the country, rough at best, had been stripped of food. Through this barren pine-clad land of northern Alabama, ever alert for scattered enemies whose exact locations were unknown, the army forced its way.

On March 22 it moved out of Chickasaw, Alabama, fifty miles northwest of where Birmingham now stands. On March 30 they swept into Elyton, now a part of Birmingham. Forrest had been compelled to disperse for food, clothing, remounts, and even recruits. His troops were still scattered when Wilson came driving in. Hood's army was gone. Some of its remnants had been sent with Johnston to face Sherman in the Carolinas. To meet Wilson's invasion there was only Forrest—plus such local units as would be drawn to the field from home defense posts.¹⁵

Southerners realized the scarcity of troops in Alabama, and the value of Alabama factories and foundries. Although details of the expedition and its plan were not clearly known the Confederacy appreciated the danger to the deep South.¹⁶ Stoneman's projected move was surmised, and "all commanding officers" were told to be prepared to operate against his flank and rear.¹⁷ Men and guns were ordered in February to reinforce Mobile. Opelika, Demopolis, and Selma were to be garrisoned, "particularly the latter on account of the value of its public workshops."¹⁸ "Western" headquarters was moved February sixteenth to Macon, Georgia, out of the threatened area.¹⁹ Columbus and West Point were to be fortified, but there were no troops for them unless furlough men returning to Virginia could be detained.²⁰ Pontoon equipment was sent safely east to Macon, and nearby Milledgeville, and there were proposals to move the machinery out of Selma and Montgomery.²¹

There was a great deficiency of small arms in the Confederate units. Funds were short and credit was breaking down. Militia organizations were weak in numbers and Georgia units were said to be composed of men of conscript age and absentees, taken into home units on promises they could stay at home.²² They were of relatively low combat value and unreliable if used in Alabama. "Desertion," Beauregard admitted "was epidemic."²³ Soldiers lacking, workmen in Selma were to be "promptly and efficiently organized and drilled."²⁴

Early in March Forrest ordered cavalry to Montevallo to stop the invader,

¹⁵ Actually General Richard Taylor was in charge of Confederate movements in Alabama. It has been pointed out that the Confederates in Alabama and Mississippi were being threatened from four directions: Memphis, Decatur, Eastport, and the Gulf. Not being able to concentrate against all of these threats, they did try and were successful in preventing Wilson and Canby from joining forces.

¹⁶ Numerous instances can be found in the Confederate correspondence to prove that they realized the strength of Wilson's force. See *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 1023, 930, 938, 962, 965, 966, 968, 994, 995, 1040, 1050, 1060; also Pt. ii, 1147, 1164, 1165.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 496; Scott, *op. cit.*, 428.

¹⁸ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 961, 962, 953.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 983.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1011.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1035-36.

²² *Ibid.*, 963.

²³ *Ibid.*, 1042.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1040.

but found difficulty getting them there because it rained almost every other day and the country was flooded with water. To move with troops, wagons, or artillery until the streams ran down was found utterly impossible.²⁵ Some troop movements were indeed made, but many of these were northwards, by way of Augusta. Hood was trying to help Johnston against Sherman in North Carolina. The local threat of Wilson was discounted. The expedition was regarded as a mere cavalry, threat—and, as understood and previously practised during the Civil War, cavalry raids were justly regarded as showy but not dangerous. "The cavalry force of Thomas's army was never a large one," the local commander at Selma was told. "Should it succeed as far as Selma, you ought to be able to manage with your rangers behind breastworks and your cavalry outside."²⁶ They were as yet unaware that Wilson's attack would be an entirely different kind of cavalry action.

Under such conditions, Wilson's movement was a thunderbolt, with a striking and a staying power far greater than any of his foes imagined. With so strong a force and facing a scattered and weakened foe, Wilson felt able to detach a sixth of his corps at Elyton, sending Croxton's entire brigade of McCook's First Division, away from the main force, down the Black Warrior river "to capture and destroy Tuscaloosa and then march to join the main body near Selma."²⁷ Wilson confidently set a rendezvous in territory then in enemy hands!

It was March 30 when Wilson reached Elyton. The same day his corps pushed on towards Montevallo, destroyed five iron works, and started south again. Emerging from the town, he met Confederate cavalry units, attacked, routed and pursued them through Plantersville thirty miles away, taking hundreds of prisoners and three pieces of artillery. The next day he kept going on towards Selma, without word from Croxton at Tuscaloosa. At three in the afternoon of the second of April he appeared in front of Selma. Wilson would wait neither for morning nor for Croxton (who was smashing the niter-works, foundry, and factory at Tuscaloosa on the fourth); he started his attack immediately.²⁸ Long's division was set astride a road to attack from the west, dismounted. Long thought Upton would protect his held horses, but Upton went right in, across a swamp the enemy had "deemed impassable."²⁹ He passed it, met less resistance than Long, penetrated the works and the town. Swamps, creek lines could not check the momentum of this force. Long indeed, had not waited to coordinate with Upton; he also struck when the opportunity came, before the spirit of his men's advance could be dulled by delay.³⁰ There was but one open space, protected according to Wilson's estimate by 1,500 of Armstrong's Confederates, "regarded as the best in Forrest's Corps." Covered by fire from the Chicago Board of Trade Battery,

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1030. For the Confederate concentration plan see also J. R. Chalmers, "Forrest and His Campaigns," in *So. Hist. Soc., Papers*, VII (1879), 485.

²⁶ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. 1, 970.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 343 ff.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 421.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 438; the plan of battle is clearly set forth in *ibid.*, 860, 438, and 473.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 361.

Long drove forward with 1,550 men on foot, "a single line without support." Upton slashed through on the left, from the north. Twenty-five minutes after the signal gun, the works were taken. When darkness came down, Selma, the most important city in the southwest, with its arsenals, foundries, and workshops had been seized.³¹ Five Confederate generals escaped in the confusion, including Forrest; but 2,700 other Confederates were captured, twenty-six field guns and seventy others.³² The same day Richmond fell, but Wilson's force did not know it until three weeks later.³³

Up to this time movement had been exceptionally rapid. Now there was a brief pause. Croxton's brigade had to come in by way of Eutaw before the command could "act as circumstances might require." The remainder of McCook's division with the wagon train would not arrive until the fifth of April. The army rested from its constant marches, did provost duty and destroyed "war resources" at this "important point."³⁴

"Once Selma had fallen," said Wilson, "the war was over in Alabama and our true line thenceforth was to the eastward."³⁵ As soon as McCook had escorted the train in, work was commenced laying a pontoon bridge across the Alabama River, eight hundred and seventy feet long, composed of thirty canvas and six wooden boats, with barges at the shore ends. For this undertaking, Wilson employed not only the material brought with him, but also "the resources of the shops in the city."³⁶

When the expedition set off to the east over roads made muddy by recent rains, Wilson wanted to be rid of some of the weight of his train. Learning that the rivers ahead of him were either narrow, or spanned by permanent bridges, he destroyed all his wooden and half his canvas boats "so that the bridge train, thus lightened, could easily keep up with the rapidly moving column."³⁷

Croxton was lost and did not rejoin until after Macon was reached. But on the tenth of April, Wilson started towards Georgia, giving McCook's Division the lead. On the twelfth, the column approached Montgomery, to be met by the mayor with a flag of truce which prevented a battle but could not save five steamboats, several locomotives, an armory, and several foundries.³⁸ The 4th Cavalry on provost duty prevented straggling and marauding as the column marched through the city with flags flying and bugles sounding. "Not a trooper left his place in ranks."³⁹ LaGrange's Brigade of McCook's Division was pushed ahead and, just at nightfall, caught up with retreating enemy detachments, twelve miles to the east. "Without halt or delay," LaGrange charged, drove his foe before him and stopped with forty or fifty prisoners and one battleflag.⁴⁰ The Con-

³¹ *Ibid.*, 393.

³² *Ibid.*, 342 ff.

³³ J. H. Wilson, *Under the Old Flag* (New York, 1912), II, 231; Scott, *op. cit.*, 425, 470.

³⁴ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 233.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

³⁶ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 361; Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 245.

³⁷ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 362.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 492; Scott, *op. cit.*, 473.

³⁹ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 250.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 254.



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MAJOR GENERAL JAMES HARRISON WILSON AND STAFF

federates had given way, but were not completely disorganized. General Adams had placed what infantry he had in railway cars and left Buford's cavalry to fall back slowly before the Union advance.⁴¹

On the fourteenth the column of Union cavalry started from its camp just east of Montgomery. LaGrange was detached to move through Opelika and capture the bridge over the Chattahoochee at West Point. The rest of the force, with Upton in the lead, took the straight road through Tuskegee towards Columbus. At Tuskegee there was not even a check. The column arrived at noon on April fifteenth, met the usual mayor asking protection, detailed the 4th Cavalry again at schools and street corners, and passed right through "with good behaviour and discipline" as in Montgomery.⁴²

Thus when Wilson so swiftly came up against the Confederates assembled to defend the crossing of the Chattahoochee at Columbus the situation was one that he could regard with favor. His cavalry corps, still nearly twelve thousand strong, almost unencumbered with wagons, was in an admirable position to storm its objective. His men were armed with the most advanced weapon of the war, the Spencer carbine. More important, they did not practice what Denison called "the absurd ineffectual fire of mounted skirmishers,"⁴³ but instead were trained to the fire fight on foot, while the 4th Cavalry was "always kept at hand" mounted and ready for the charge when the enemy began to break.⁴⁴ At Selma, indeed, these latter troops had been the only men actually to get in to the melee mounted. Wilson had remembered how he had let his horsemen get too far ahead of their held animals at Nashville in December, and his technique was better at Selma, where he utilized the new firepower and yet did not neglect the old shock action. In the whole movement up to and before Columbus Wilson knew he was making cavalry history, saying at the time that he regarded the attack on Selma as "the most remarkable achievement in the history of modern cavalry, and one admirably illustrative of its new powers and tendencies."⁴⁵

In addition to these advantages of training and direction, Wilson's men were seasoned troops, men who had reenlisted for the war after their three years' term had expired.⁴⁶ No bounty men, substitutes, or draftees predominated in this force. Their general called them "veterans of ripe experience."⁴⁷ The problem of mounts, however, was more pressing. Wilson used street-car and livery stable, carriage and circus horses,⁴⁸ whose performance testified to the fact that he had picked and chosen well from what he could get and had trained and hardened them for the work intended, for his force marched and fought 528 miles in twenty-eight days.⁴⁹ In the last seven days, it had advanced from Montgomery to Macon, 215 miles,

⁴¹ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 505.

⁴² Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 255.

⁴³ Denison, *op. cit.*, 393.

⁴⁴ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 231.

⁴⁵ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 360. See also LaGrange's preface to Scott, *op. cit.*, xvii-xviii. Wilson no doubt profited by the lessons of his disastrous efforts to cut the railroads feeding Richmond and Petersburg in the summer of 1864.

⁴⁶ Gilpin, *op. cit.*, 631; Scott, *op. cit.*, 179.

⁴⁷ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 21.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 293.

including two days' delay at Columbus.⁵⁰ In this connection it should also be noted that much of the weight and power of Wilson's thrusts came from his policy of concentration.⁵¹ Croxton, it is true, was separately detached to Tuscaloosa, and LaGrange to West Point; but these detachments still left Wilson with a comfortable margin of superiority over the enemy. As far as possible his policy and practice was to operate *en masse* instead of in separated units.

Finally, the commander himself was intelligent, energetic, and brave. Wilson had something of the dash and spirit of Kilpatrick and Custer, without their impetuosity. His tactics proved singularly well adapted to exploit the somewhat demoralized and disorganized condition of the enemy. His energy had been shown by the completeness of his preparations prior to the battle of Nashville, and also at Waterloo previous to the Alabama campaign. His personal bravery was beyond question. "I felt it my duty to show myself," he said of Selma, where, on his most conspicuous horse he took his staff and battle flag into the thickest of the fight.⁵² He also placed himself at the head of the 4th Cavalry and led them in a charge to the second line of the enemy trenches. With Wilson, immediately leading the advance on Columbus, was Emory Upton, of Chancellorsville fame. Upton then commanded the Fourth Division, and was later to become even more widely known for his military studies than for his skill on the battlefield.

Columbus, the objective of this capable force, was a growing city on a high flat river bank at the head of navigation on the Chattahoochee, systematically and beautifully laid out with straight broad streets. In 1860 it boasted a population of 9,000, two-thirds of which was composed of free whites, for it was a manufacturing town, and a rich one. The 150-foot fall of the river provided cheap water power and splendid locations for cotton and woollen mills. The volume of manufacturing in Columbus may be indicated by the fact that a fire in 1859 consumed half a million dollars worth of baled cotton. By the standards of its age and locality, it was a progressive city; the council had even given financial assistance to help bring railroads into town.⁵³ Drums, fifes, sabres, rifles, caps, the Haiman Brothers bayonets and pistols, wood jeans for uniforms, and shoes were all made there; corn meal and flour were milled; the government operated shops producing ammunition cases and cannon, and in the Columbus arsenal ammunition was manufactured, while the Naval Iron Works produced guns and gunboats.⁵⁴ Columbus was certainly the center of those "war resources" at which Grant and Sherman desired to strike vital blows.

Although many citizens had been drawn from the city into the army (Columbus had contributed twenty companies of men),⁵⁵ there were reasons why it was not entirely devoid of potential soldiers, for the state of Georgia had steadily resisted the Confederate conscription act, keeping many men at home for state militia

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 291.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 229.

⁵³ John H. Martin, *Columbus, Georgia* (Columbus, 1874-75), 113, 118, 119.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 117-19, 124, 142.

and local defense;⁵⁶ and, besides, the demands of war-time industry had brought in many workers and their families.⁵⁷ Thus the town had two companies of "City Guards," the "Ivy Guards" and the "Chattahoochee Defenders."⁵⁸ Nevertheless, its defensive strength was not great. Late in 1864 the population had been nervously wondering what Sherman might do in their direction.⁵⁹ Breastworks had been thrown up to the east of the city, at the hills on the Macon Road, and some soldiers had been detailed here to supervise military manufacturing and for guards. The principal local defense, however, depended on eight hundred old men, boys, and workmen from the shops.⁶⁰ Commanding was a German Colonel Von Zinthen, with a French Captain, one Isadore Guillet, for aide. When Wilson's main move became known, additional breastworks were constructed across the river on the Alabama side to protect the bridges. "If tem tam Yankees come, I make vun hell of a tam fuss,"⁶¹ declared the Colonel with optimistic reference to a long row of brass cannon placed in front of headquarters on the main street.

But Wilson had advanced faster than the Columbus citizens realized. Adams had fallen back before Upton, horse and foot, by road and train. General Howell Cobb from Macon, head of the Georgia troops, with Buford of Kentucky, had come to see what could be done to stop the Union advance. There were thus available for resistance two regiments of Georgians, Waddell's battery of artillery, remnants of Buford's force from Selma, the local "militia" and Georgia and Alabama "reserves," hastily gathered. In all, it has been stated, there were about two thousand disciplined and undisciplined troops with which to protect the city.⁶²

So oblivious were the Confederates to Wilson's imminent approach that a Columbus newspaper on Saturday, April 15, 1865, proclaimed:

We are satisfied that the enemy will not move in any considerable force from Montgomery for several days to come . . . If Columbus should be threatened, our people demand that an official of known ability and sobriety be at the head of affairs. Let sober men—men of integrity and stability of purpose—raise companies for the defense of the city. If such will take hold, every man in Columbus when the emergency arises will fight to the bitter end to defend his home and that of his neighbor.⁶³

Colonel Von Zinthen was said to hold "command in the field" and it is possible that the editor was speaking indirectly in criticism of him. But General Cobb was on the spot, and he was well known. General Samuel G. French was also on hand, but he left town promising to return on Monday.⁶⁴

Sunday morning, when it was plain that Wilson was actually approaching, plans for the defense of Columbus were altered. There were not enough troops

⁵⁶ A. B. Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* (New York, 1924), passim.

⁵⁷ Martin, *op. cit.*, 142.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁵⁹ Nancy Telfair, *A History of Columbus, Georgia, 1828-1928* (Columbus, 1929), 120.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 134.

⁶³ Quoted in Telfair, *op. cit.*, 133. The Confederate authorities were probably better informed than this editorial would indicate. On April 6 General Howell Cobb informed President Davis that Columbia was in "immediate danger" (*O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. ii, 1208).

⁶⁴ Telfair, *op. cit.*, 134.

to man the outer fortifications on the Alabama side, so new rifle pits were hastily dug closer in to protect the high hill, the upper bridge, and Phoenix City. Artillery pieces were emplaced and trenches prepared near both ends of each bridge. The flooring of the lower bridge was partially removed, and cotton waste and oil were used on its wooden structure to insure a rapid conflagration.⁶⁵

Out of Columbus to the West, across the muddy Chattahoochee, was a railroad bridge into Alabama. There were two others, the lower one led into the tiny town of Girard, and the upper—the “factory bridge” led into what is now Phoenix City. From the high western bank of the river three roads fan out—one runs southwest toward Seale, one runs northwest towards Opelika, and the other runs on a straight line from Crawford, Tuskegee, and Montgomery.

Along this third road on Easter morning, 1865, came Upton's Fourth Division, with General Andrew J. Alexander's Second Brigade leading, headed by Colonel B. B. Eggleston's 1st Ohio Cavalry. “After a comfortable night in the country, six miles from Tuskegee with plenty of food for man and beast,” their morale was high as the march was resumed early that Easter morning.⁶⁶ The country was poor, broken, covered with a dense growth of stunted pine and oak, not so fertile as that near Selma. Roads were generally good, although they had to be corduroyed in places. The weather was fine, “beautiful, clear, spring-like.”⁶⁷ At the town of Crawford, the 1st Ohio hit Confederate outposts and drove on so fast as to prevent the destruction of the important bridges.⁶⁸ This was at nine-thirty in the morning. The march continued and about two in the afternoon Eggleston's men caught sight of Columbus across the river, banked against a dim blue line of hills to the east, and came into the mile-wide valley of Mill Creek which drops into the Chattahoochee.⁶⁹ Led by Eggleston in person, with great gallantry, the Ohio cavalrymen drove in the pickets and fought through the village of Girard. Peppered by skirmishers, fired at in flank by a battery on the red hill near the upper bridge,⁷⁰ they pushed forward for the lower bridge, reached its western end, and then stopped. Its flooring had been torn up, and all they could do was to engage the rifle pits on the eastern bank with small arms fire. Three pieces of artillery belched grape and canister. Confederates touched off the oil and cotton and the wooden bridge was soon a mass of flames.⁷¹

Upton came up. With his staff he occupied a place on a little knoll amid a fusillade of projectiles.⁷² He saw the futility of trying to force a bridge already in process of rapid destruction. Confederate guns on high ground to the north were sweeping the entire Mill Creek area. The Confederates were protected by a wide stream. They had fortified dominating positions on the west bank. Their lower redoubt near the upper bridge, with six 12-pounder howitzers and four 10-pounder Parrott's, completely controlled the Mill Creek valley. Accordingly

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 258; *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 408.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 408, 501, 502.

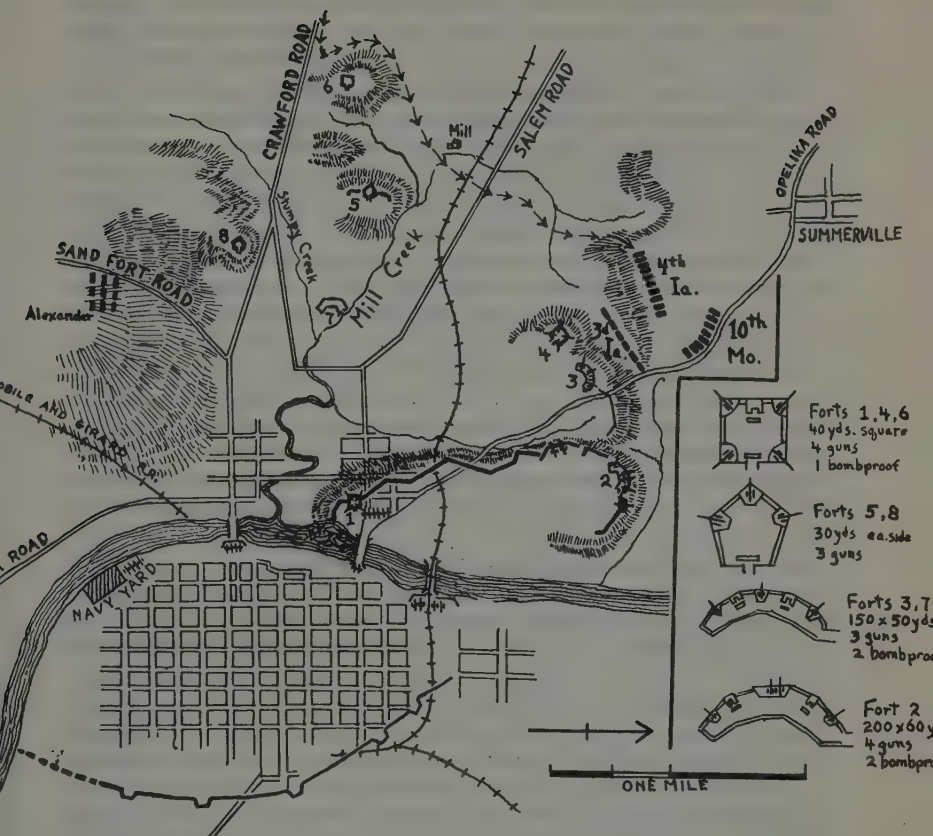
⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Telfair, *op. cit.*, 135; Gilpin, *op. cit.*, 652.

⁷⁰ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 501, 502.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 474.

⁷² Gilpin, *op. cit.*, 652.



Upton ordered the withdrawal and a new move.

Rodney's battery fired enough shells to develop the enemy gun positions. The rest of Alexander's Brigade came up after the skirmishers onto the hill line to act as a holding force, "lay down, under fire from the enemy's artillery, and awaited further orders." Back in the column, Winslow's Brigade had taken cover in an assembly position in a hollow of hills.⁷³ For a time it was prepared to fight on foot in the same direction as Alexander's effort; but Upton's orders arrived and it was again mounted up. It was turned off to the left and north

⁷³ O. R., Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 498, 503.

on a wide detour. By four o'clock when General Wilson arrived on the spot, the brigade was already on its way.⁷⁴ The plan was made. Two companies of Young's 5th Iowa were detached from Alexander and preceded Winslow's movement.⁷⁵

It took time for the rear units to come up. Enemy fire and superior observation widened the detour behind the screening hills, and that took more time. There was a deliberate pause of a couple of hours to rest and feed horses and men. While this was being accomplished, Upton made a "rapid but close" personal reconnaissance of the enemy works. It would be seven-thirty and dark before the companies of the 5th Iowa under Captain Lewis could drive in opposing pickets and develop the strong line of works believed to mark the enemy main position. Minty and the Second Division were miles back, still *en route*, and would not arrive until seven next morning.⁷⁶ The Second Division had borne the brunt of the effort at Selma and "it was Upton's turn to have the honor." The first contact; the reconnaissance; the plan of battle was his. There was one hitch. Winslow took longer getting into position than had been calculated, and did not face the Confederate works until eight-thirty. Rather than wait until morning, Upton proposed a night assault with the forces at hand—his own division alone. Wilson concurred and ordered the attack. The men in ranks were veterans of ripe experience. "By jingo, I'll do it," said Upton, "and I'll sweep everything before me."⁷⁷

The road leading northwest toward Opelika runs along a ridge line, as so many roads in that southern country do. The Confederates had placed entrenchments there, some of which overlooked and commanded the Mill Creek flats.⁷⁸ The white road would be a guiding ribbon in the darkness. Behind the skirmish line which had developed the Confederate position, Winslow formed his brigade in column of regiments ready for the attack. All six companies of the 3d Iowa Cavalry present (Colonel John W. Noble) formed dismounted in line two hundred yards from the enemy, the left of the regiment touching and to follow the Opelika road into town to the bridge.⁷⁹ Four hundred yards behind them was the 10th Missouri (Colonel F. W. Benteen), mounted. On a sheltered by-road two hundred yards farther back and mounted also was the 4th Iowa (Colonel John H. Peters). In this formation, the brigade, covered by Lewis's companies, was given "an hour of absolute rest."⁸⁰

Confederate entrenchments and redoubts protecting the upper bridge in general formed the shape of a large letter "L"—the long part of the letter on the ridge lying parallel to the river, the short bottom reaching west across the Opelika road. These works appeared to Colonel Noble to be well manned. Four 12-

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 363, 503.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 442.

⁷⁷ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 260.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁷⁹ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 492, 493; Gilpin, *op. cit.*, 653. Col. John H. Noble was later Secretary of the Interior in President Harrison's Cabinet.

⁸⁰ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 261.

pounders were in the fort at the angle of the "L" east of the road. Near the bridge were two more battalions, one on the road and one to the right of the road.⁸¹ The defenders were familiar with the ground; they had seen it by day. The attacking troopers had come up only after dark. Their assault, once the first redoubt was taken, would proceed from commanding ground down hill along a guiding road; but to take advantage of this road it would be necessary to penetrate the enemy's works twice, once across the bottom of the "L," then pass parallel to the river along most of the long part of the "L" before piercing it again at the bridge. This was far from being a simple task.

As Noble pushed his regiment up the steep slope to the first redoubt, the Confederates opened fire.⁸² Yelling and shouting the Third Iowas charged this work, which was at first mistaken for the enemy main line. Its occupants fled to the battery and to the other works, where the 12-pounders had now gone into action. The Union line had swung obliquely, right to the front, and now found itself partially facing a new position.

Thinking the main position had been pierced, Wilson sent the 10th Missouri mounted on a mad dash for the bridge. Upton interfered and stopped all but two companies. These drew heavy fire from the principal Confederate fort and rifle pits.⁸³ Noble was ordered to drive in against the position which paralleled the river, a movement which required pivoting his entire line to the left, in the dark and over unknown, broken ground, across fence, ditch, and slough. Pressure, from the nature of the movement, was heavier to the right, so the main fort to the left was only lightly assailed and was not taken until later in the evening. But to the right the entrenchments were entered and the major flanking danger to the route along the road was removed.

In the meanwhile Captain McGlasson with the two companies of the 10th Missouri galloped down the white road under the stars, between the flashes of fire, rode coolly through a gap in the defensive parapet and went straight for the bridge and the bridge guard. He captured the guard, captured the battery at the other end with his sudden surprise thrust, but far too many Confederates closed in upon him. He had no cover from which to fight dismounted—so he rallied his troopers and galloped back to his starting point. There the battle for the long length of the "L" was still in progress.

The 10th Missouri was now ordered to dismount and assist in advancing the attack. But most of the regiment was badly shaken and confused by being forced to stand for a long period under fire from the enemy line. It was not in hand.⁸⁴

So the 4th Iowa, already close to the line, was dismounted, except for four companies held as a reserve, and sent against the works which the 3d Iowa had pierced. The 4th was to extend and exploit Colonel Noble's success. It did and the position fell. There was no time for taking prisoners. They were made to

⁸¹ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 492, 493.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 474; Gilpin, *op. cit.*, 653.

⁸³ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 493.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 481.

hurl away their arms into the blackness of the night and "left where found." As soon as the Iowans got well inside the entrenchments, they swung to the right directly toward the bridge. Near the end of the line of rifle pits they took a final redoubt, defended by 250 men with six 12-pounder howitzers and four 10-pounder Parrotts, and rushed on. "Selma! Selma!" the men cried. "Go for the bridge! Waste no time with prisoners!"⁸⁵ Through the small town of Phoenix they dashed and fought. A portion of this force ran across the covered bridge (this was the "upper" bridge) so closely behind the fleeing Confederates that the foe could neither fire the structure "stuffed with cotton and wet with turpentine" nor shoot through the mass of Southern fugitives.⁸⁶ The men of Company "L" and "C" of the 4th Iowa, first over, seized the two 12-pounder howitzers and their caissons.

The third battalion of the 4th, which had been left mounted, came along at speed, clattered over the Chattahoochee, and swept right and left through the streets of Columbus after the fleeing enemy, taking prisoners at will. The river was crossed. Resistance collapsed at this single sustained stroke in the dark. Columbus "the last great manufacturing place and storehouse of the Confederacy" was in Union hands. For the entire engagement Upton reported 10 killed and 28 wounded. The Columbus newspaper editor could find record of only a few of the defenders who had fallen, and Wilson said: "The enemy's loss, like ours, was doubtless inconsiderable. Darkness had protected the fighting men of both forces."⁸⁷

Private Wood, Company "A," previously taken prisoner, captured his captor, Colonel Cole, and his adjutant, and turned them and several others over as prisoners. Detachments were told off to the railroad station, to seize the eastern end of the railroad bridge, and to other important points. There were 1,500 prisoners taken, twenty-seven guns on the defenses, and thirty-six in the arsenal.

Minty with the Second Division arrived in the morning and was sent out the Macon road in pursuit of fugitive units. In the meanwhile Winslow had placed in command of the city. By ten o'clock on the night of the assault, the 3d Iowa was on duty as provost guard.⁸⁸ Private property was to be protected, but every factory and warehouse was burned, except one—near the bridge—whose owner, Colonel Mott, could properly boast that his house, decked for four years with a United States flag, had "never been out of the Union."⁸⁹ One hundred and sixty thousand bales of cotton, equaling the entire number previously destroyed at both Selma and Montgomery, were burned. The navy yard, the arsenal, foundry, armory, sword and pistol factory, accountrement shops, a paper mill, four cotton factories, all the bridges on the river, 15 locomotives, 200 railway cars—were destroyed.⁹⁰ An iron-clad ram, the *Jackson*, mounting six 7-inch guns, launched on

⁸⁵ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 264; O. R., Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 498; Scott, *op. cit.*, 497

⁸⁶ Telfair, *op. cit.*, 136; Scott, *op. cit.*, 498-99.

⁸⁷ Wilson, *op. cit.* II, 265, 66; O. R., Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 408, 476. ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 494.

⁸⁹ Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 267.

⁹⁰ O. R., Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 344.

the twenty-second of December preceding and ready to put to sea, was demolished.⁹¹ Newspaper presses were also deliberately smashed, including that of the *Memphis Appeal*, which had brought its violent anti-Union invective in turn from Tennessee to Jackson, Atlanta, Montgomery, and finally to Columbus.⁹²

On the day the battle was fought, April 16, the Fourth Division of the cavalry corps alone was up. (Of this force six companies of the 3d Iowa, left as provost guard at Montgomery, were not with their regiment but had been held back to guard the train of the column,⁹³ and a detachment of 200 of the 10th Missouri had turned off at Crawford to try to capture a bridge at Clapp's factory, three miles above Columbus.)⁹⁴ Minty of the Second Division was still on the road, camped ten miles to the west after marching thirty-nine miles;⁹⁵ he came in next morning, as already indicated, and bivouacked on the Macon road out of town and ten miles east. McCook's First Division had been split; LaGrange with its Second Brigade was this day successfully assaulting the entrenchments of Fort Tyler at West Point;⁹⁶ Croxton with its First Brigade was still far out of touch somewhere on the Sipsey River.⁹⁷

The afternoon of the seventeenth, General Wilson ordered Minty to march on Macon and send a small detachment ahead to seize the crossings of the Flint River.⁹⁸ The entire command followed on the morning of the eighteenth. Upton moved at 8:30 A. M. on Minty's rear. The provost guard cleared the town at 10 A. M.⁹⁹ The weather was still pleasant; roads were good; over the hard red clay the column moved rapidly.¹⁰⁰ Deserted wagons and cannon along the way testified to the Confederate haste and confusion. Indeed, there is a local tradition to the effect that General Cobb was in such a hurry to get away from Columbus that he and his staff rode inadvertently onto a race track in the dark, and round and round all night, with a white picket fence flashing constantly by, until day broke and revealed their circular progress.¹⁰¹

At 6 A. M. on the twentieth, Minty's advance guard, the 17th Indiana, met a flag of truce, a group from Macon with news that Johnston had surrendered to Sherman and in the capitulation had arranged a general armistice. General Wilson refused to recognize its validity and took possession of the city of Macon. Next day a telegram from Sherman confirmed the information.

In less than a month Wilson's cavalry corps had marched and fought for five hundred miles. It had destroyed the four remaining Confederate manufactories of war supplies in the deep South. Although Wilson's main objectives were the basic war resources of the deep south, to destroy arsenals and keep supplies from going to Virginia and North Carolina, there were soldiers in the deep south too. These were an objective for Wilson as well as Canby. That is why it is improper to look upon this unusual cavalry operation as a mere raid. A study of this campaign should have many values for the student of mechanized warfare.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 485; Wilson, *op. cit.*, II, 265. ⁹² *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 494; Scott, *op. cit.*, 502.

⁹³ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 492.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 480.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 389-91; Scott, *op. cit.*, 493.

⁹⁶ *O. R.*, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. i, 386.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 387.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 365.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 494.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 408.

¹⁰¹ Telfair, *op. cit.*, 137.

PROFESSIONAL NEWS

The Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga., has recently published three useful handbooks for their students in the field of military history. They are: *Military History: Methods of Research* (Reference Text No. 25); *An Outline of the Military History Course*, and an *Illustrative Monograph: Retrograde Movements* (The Battle of the Yalu, The Russian Withdrawal from Action, May 1, 1904.) These publications illustrate the technique used at the Infantry School in the presentation of historical and tactical studies.

* * *

Among noteworthy groups of records recently received by The National Archives from the Adjutant General's Office are correspondence and other papers of the Secretary of War and of the headquarters of the Army, 1800-1903; original records of discontinued military posts, units, and geographical commands, 1835-1912; original muster rolls, 1818-65, and strength returns, 1812-98, of volunteer troops in various wars; manuscript documents and maps used in compiling the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*; and records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1865-72. A selection of military maps and maps resulting from geographical explorations and surveys, most of which fall between 1789 and 1894, is in process of transfer from the Office of the Chief of Engineers.

* * *

Miss Mary Gorgas, assistant librarian at the library of the University of Alabama, near Tuscaloosa, is a daughter of the late General Josiah Gorgas, C. S. A., the distinguished chief of the Confederate Ordnance Bureau, and a sister of the late Colonel William C. Gorgas, U. S. A., whose name will ever be linked with the eradication of yellow fever in Cuba and the Panama Canal Zone. Miss Gorgas is the possessor of a manuscript diary kept by her father from 1857 to 1870. She also owns and values highly a manuscript sketch of his life written by Thomas A. L. Bayne. Both the diary and the biographical material would be made accessible by Miss Gorgas to serious historical research workers desiring to consult them at the University.

* * *

Restoration of historic features of Moores Creek National Military Park, N. C., has progressed to the point of changing the location of the monument

commemorating the victory of the North Carolina patriots over the Tories on February 27, 1776. This monument blocked the original roadway to the bridge, the most strategic point in the battle. The present bridge is not the original, but a restoration built in 1900.

* * *

Several articles and documents relating to American military history are listed in "Guide to *The Washington Historical Quarterly* and *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 1906-1938," compiled by Jesse S. Douglas, which appeared in *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, October, 1938 (XXIX, 339-416).

* * *

Major Elbridge Colby is an author familiar to civilian as well as military readers, for his books range from *The English Catholic Poets* to *American Militarism*. His service in the Regular Army began in 1917. He received a Ph.D. degree at Columbia University in 1922 and until recently was Assistant Professor of Military Science and Tactics at the University of Vermont. At present he is attached to the Historical Section, Army War College.

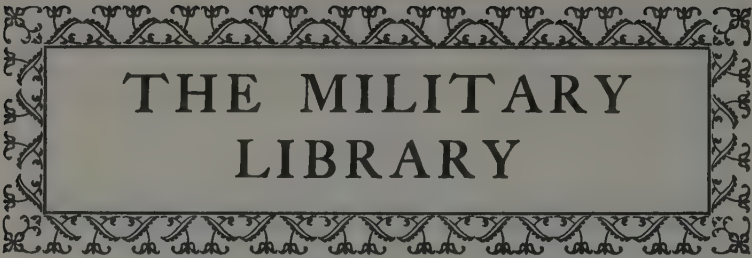
Dr. T. Harry Williams is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin, where he received a Ph.D. degree in 1936, and Assistant Professor of History at Omaha University. He has made a special study of the Committee on the Conduct of the Civil War.

* * *

The laying of the corner stone of the new Naval Academy Museum took place on October 8, the ceremony being performed by Rear Admiral David F. Sellers, U. S. N. It was largely through the instrumentality of this officer that the Navy Athletic Association and the U. S. Naval Institute advanced gifts to the Superintendent of \$150,000 and \$50,000 respectively for the purpose of erecting the building. The Act of Congress enabling the Secretary of the Navy to accept these gifts and authorizing the construction of the Museum was approved March 26, 1938.

The Museum will be a two-story and basement structure with mansard roof, its architectural appearance to be in harmony with that of the surrounding Academy buildings. The first floor will house the exhibits, including the Rogers collection of ship models and the Beverley R. Robinson collection of naval prints. The second floor will house the offices of the two organizations which advanced the \$200,000, while the basement will have rest and lounge rooms, a well-equipped shop and store rooms.

The building is being constructed under the supervision of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, Navy Department, Washington, from plans drawn and prepared by Mr. F. D. Southworth, an architect in that bureau. It is expected that the dedication will take place at next year's graduation ceremonies.



THE MILITARY LIBRARY

Tarnished Warrior: Major-General James Wilkinson, by James Ripley Jacobs.
(New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938, Pp. 380. \$3.50.)

One must combine the functions of a detective and an historian to write a successful biography of James Wilkinson. The general's achievements in the realms of dishonesty ranged from petty graft in army supplies to treasonous relations with the government of Spain at a time when he was in command of the army of the United States in the West. The documentary proof of his guilt, undiscovered during his lifetime, has been known for many years, but to weave the evidence into a readable narrative is no small achievement. To add to his difficulties the writer must provide as background an account of the history of the Old Southwest in the decades before and after the Louisiana Purchase, one of the most confusing periods in the nation's annals. Major Jacobs has surmounted these difficulties and has achieved a brilliant synthesis. His work is outstanding, not because he has discovered new facts, but because he has presented available knowledge with great clarity. Here for the first time is a dispassionate and fully documented biography of the most amazing scoundrel who ever wore the uniform of the American army.

One may well study the engaging portraits of Wilkinson reproduced in this volume with some care, for the general's pleasant, even jovial countenance, coupled with his affable personality, deceived some of the shrewdest men of his day. He must have been a consummate actor, for on the numerous occasions when he was called upon to defend himself, he assumed such an air of injured innocence that he apparently convinced himself as well as others. He was in constant need of money, which explains much, but there was an innate skill in lying, of laying plots for the sheer fun of it, which are beyond casual explanation. Possibly he enjoyed the game of cheating the cheaters. At any rate he must have taken pleasure in collecting \$26,000 from the Spanish government in a ten year period for "information" largely concocted by his own fertile imagination. Even Aaron Burr was made to serve his purposes; for by revealing Burr's plan to the Spanish he could seem to be earning his pension, and by warning the authorities at Washington he could repair his reputation which was growing somewhat threadbare.

The student of military history will derive much profit from this book. It throws light on a period which has been relatively obscure. Under the pacifist

Jefferson the regular army had been reduced to an absurdity, and that badly managed. If there is a more disgraceful chapter in our peace-time military annals than Wilkinson's maladministration of the post below New Orleans it has not yet been recorded. As a general Wilkinson wore his uniform well. Such reputation as he may have had was punctured by his obvious incompetence on the Canadian border during the War of 1812. But with his usual self-assurance he insisted on an investigation.

The book is brilliantly, but somewhat unevenly written, and the reader in a few instances is called upon to share with the author the complexity and confusion of the period being described. In format the book is attractive and its value is enhanced by excellent portraits and maps, a bibliography and index.

WILLIAM T. UTTER

Denison University

America Goes to War, by Charles Callan Tansill. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 1938. Pp. 730. \$5.00.)

Dr. Tansill has produced a volume which unquestionably will be regarded as the standard work on the period of American neutrality from 1914-1917. This work is based upon an exhaustive research in American, British, and German documents and overshadows the studies made of this period by Millis, Baker, Seymour, and Paxson. In the opinion of one discriminating critic this work is not only by far the best analysis of American neutrality, but its conclusions make necessary a thorough-going revision of some of the written "history" of this period.

In the light of Dr. Tansill's research, it becomes clear that many commonly held views of Bryan, Lansing, and House must be altered. One gains a new appreciation in these pages of Mr. Bryan's wisdom and humanity. The secretary of state who provided the diplomatic corps at Washington with so many precious bits of amusement during Wilson's first administration takes on a new stature. One gets a new and rather disturbing view of Colonel House flitting about from questions of high finance, to diplomacy, to matters of international law with astonishing facility but with a rather fixed tendency to see the Allied point of view on all "dangerous questions." It appears that Mr. Lansing's legalistic mind and comprehensive knowledge of the nice points of international law enabled him to make an effective lawyer's case against Germany and at the same time to overlook the legal weaknesses of the British case. It also appears that at many critical periods Mr. Lansing had paramount influence with the President.

Dr. Tansill concludes that the mass of American citizens were eager to preserve neutrality from 1914-1917. Some, notably Rear Admiral Chadwick, were violently anti-English in their point of view. He discounts the theory that "Big Business" forced a reluctant country into war in order to safeguard their investments. Thus the whole effect of this ponderous volume is to emphasize the complicated nature of the neutrality problem and to show the difficulties of maintaining such a policy in the face of a large-scale European conflict.

The portraits which Dr. Tansill draws of the war-time diplomats in Washington have the harsh, unflattering character commonly found in passport photographs. The British ambassador Sir Cecil Spring-Rice possessed a vicious temper and a biting tongue. M. Jules Jusserand, regarded by many American historians with veneration, was often equally insulting and bitter against American attitudes. Perversely enough, the much-abused Count Bernstorff appears in a favorable light by contrast. But the sound advice of this discreet and tactful statesman was repeatedly ignored by *Wilhelmstrasse*. The importance of the anti-American activities of Captain Boy-Ed, von Papen, and Dr. Dumba is greatly diminished by Dr. Tansill's study. Their stupidity and naiveté served to offset their intentions however evil they might have been. The art of muddling is not essentially a British monopoly.

The size and rather formidable character of Dr. Tansill's book will tend to discourage the superficial reader. That is unfortunate, since the superficial reader is likely to be John Everyman, the much-talked about average citizen, who needs the sobering lessons of this book much more than the professors who will read it. The author's written style can scarcely be described as "brilliant," but the relentless movement of his orderly paragraphs and chapters is like the pitiless advance of an overwhelming and victorious army.

H. A. DE WEERD

Denison University

* * *

War at Sea Under Queen Anne, by J. H. Owen. (Cambridge: at the University Press; New York: The Macmillan Company. 1938. Pp. 316. \$7.50.)

It is surprising that so little has been said about a period of naval warfare that so closely approaches the present in underlying strategic conditions and in which lies the genesis of many of the concepts included in that rather vaguely used term, sea-power. Queen Anne's War, the War of the Spanish Succession, was Marlborough's war and the age of Prince Eugène; in the light cast by these radiant figures all other glories tend to dim, but one would have expected before this a detailed investigation of England's seizure of the gate to the Mediterranean and her first foothold among the islands of that inland sea.

Perhaps the reason is that most naval studies are by Englishmen, a race notoriously not given to the contemplation of their own defeats. Like the World War, that of Queen Anne's reign was one in which the British navy fumbled toward strategic victory through a haze of tactical disasters. There was only one great fleet action, at best a draw; in several minor combats British ships were taken or sent flying to refuge, for this was the period when France raised the *guerre de course* to the level of a strategic system under Duguay-Trouin, Forbin, Du Casse and St. Pol. There is some excellent analysis of the reasons for the French successes here, including a new doctrine of naval war—that in order both to protect seaborne commerce and to contain an enemy fleet in being, the

stronger navy requires a superiority of force perfectly outrageous by mathematical computation. There are also some excellent studies of English naval personalities, a feature too often neglected by military historians who tend to forget that in the last analysis, history is the product of a formula which includes personality as well as conditions. The documentation is so good as to be too good, Mr. Owen revealing a weakness for quoting long extracts from contemporary official papers, which begin by being quaint and end by being wearisome. Perhaps the best way to read the volume is as the foreground of some large history of the period, like Churchill's *Marlborough*.

FLETCHER PRATT

New York, N. Y.

OTHER RECENT BOOKS

From Saints to Red Legs. Madison Barracks—The History of a Border Post, by Major Gordon G. Heiner, Jr. (Watertown, N. Y.: A. W. Munk & Co. Press. 1938. Pp. 80. \$1.00.) Military and civil history of Sackett Harbor from Indian times to the present, replete with local legends and army reminiscences.

Quanah, The Eagle of the Comanches, by Zoe A. Tilghman. (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Corporation. 1938. Pp. 196. \$2.50.) An imaginative yet sufficiently historical account of the Comanche chief by the widow of a famous western character who knew Quanah intimately.

The Immortal Heritage: An Account of the Work and Policy of the Imperial War Graves Commission . . . 1917-1937, by Fabian Ware. (Cambridge, England: The University Press. 1937. Pp. 80. \$1.25.) Description of the work of the Commission with many fine photographs.

History of the Bombay Army, by Sir Patrick Cadell. (New York: Longmans, Green & Company, 1938. Pp. 362. \$7.50.) A thorough-going and quite impartial history of one of the divisions of the Indian Army.

Kampfwagenkrieg, by General Ludwig Ritter von Eimannsberger. (Munich: J. F. Lehmann. 1938. Pp. 236. \$3.00.) New edition of this sound study of mechanized warfare. The author, a retired officer of the Austrian army, has approached his subject from a critically historical viewpoint.

Blood and Steel, by Bernhard Menne. (New York: Lee Furman, Inc. 1938. Pp. 407. \$3.00.) Further substantiation of the now-accepted facts on the internationalism and culpability of larger armament houses. Gives a reasonably comprehensive history of the Krupp family and the munition works at Essen but attempts little further. Written by a former employee who was forced to flee from Germany.

Sebastien le Prestre de Vauban, 1633-1707, by Sir Reginald Blomfield. (London: Methuen & Company, Ltd. 1938. Pp. 143. \$5.00.) A compilation of facts, rather than a critical biography, on the life of the great French builder of fortifications.

RECENT PERIODICAL LITERATURE

Anon., "Wally Returns," in *Time*, October 17, 1938 (XXXII, 36-37). Brief account of the work of Albion A. Wallgren, cartoonist of *The Stars and Stripes* and later of the American Legion.

Lt. Col. A. C. M. Azoy, "Our One Battle War," in *The Coast Artillery Journal*, September-October 1938 (LXXXI, 348-54). Battle of San Juan, Cuba.

Wesley C. Ballaine, "Personalities in the Military Occupation of San Juan Island," in *The Reserve Officer*, September 1938 (XV, 17-20). Brief review of the "Pig War" of 1859.

George G. Bruntz, "Allied Propaganda and the Collapse of German Morale in 1918," in *Public Opinion Quarterly*, January 1938 (II, 61-76). Propaganda discussed as "an important instrument of warfare" during the World War.

Rushton Coulborn, "The Causes of War and the Study of History," in *The Journal of Social Philosophy*, October, 1938 (IV, 57-68). A criticism of the concept of conflict as a natural relation among nations, and war as a healthful activity.

R. Ernest Dupuy, "Books and the Next War," in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, November 26, 1938 (XIX, 3-4ff.). Summary of recent trends in popular war and preparedness literature.

———, "The Greatest Mutiny in History," in *Scribner's Magazine*, October, 1938 (CIV, 10-12ff.). Brief résumé of some known aspects of mutiny in the French army in May, 1917; colorful rather than informative.

Wilbur C. Hall, "Sergeant Champe's Adventure," in *The William and Mary College Quarterly*, July 1938 (2nd ser., XVIII, 322-42). An account of the attempt to kidnap Benedict Arnold in 1780; reprinted from *United Service Journal*, December 1834; sequel to "Sergeant John Champe and Certain of His Contemporaries," in the former journal (XVII, 145-75).

John H. Marion, "Organization for Internal Control and Coordination in the United States Army," in *The American Political Science Review*, October 1938 (XXXII, 877-97). A study of military organization with analysis of features of possible value to other types of public administration.

Captain E. K. Pettibone, "Fresh Bread Day," in *The Quartermaster Review*, July-August 1938 (XVIII, 17-19ff.). Short description of baking methods in the Army since 1861.

Fletcher Pratt, "Last of the Romans," in *The Infantry Journal*, September-October 1938 (XLV, 433-41). Episodes in the career of Anthony Wayne.

E. A. Raymond and Harry W. Baer, Jr., "A History of War Games," in *The Reserve Officer*, October 1938 (XV, 19-20) and November (XV, 17-18ff.). Discussion of development of Kriegspiel and suggestions for an improved war game.

John A. Scott, "Joseph Brant at Fort Stanwix and Oriskany," in *New York History*, October 1938 (XIX, 399-406). Story of St. Leger's campaign of 1777, giving reasons for its failure.

Raymond L. Welty, "Supplying the Frontier Posts," in *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, May 1938 (VII, 154-69). Well documented study.

NOTES AND ANTIQUITIES

CONFEDERATE RAILROAD BATTERY AT JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, MARCH 1863, NOT THE FIRST USE OF RAILWAY ORDNANCE IN THE UNITED STATES

In the fall issue of the *JOURNAL* of the Foundation, Mr. T. Frederick Davis published a very interesting document from the diary of Dr. Alfred Walton, surgeon of the 8th Maine Volunteer Infantry, in which was related an account of the use of a Confederate railway battery in operations around Jacksonville, Florida, in March, 1863.¹

In the spirit of friendly and constructive criticism, the present writer begs leave to take exception to two statements made in the article accompanying this document. In the first place, the title of the article refers to the railroad battery as a "steam gun." Notwithstanding the fact that the descriptive term was enclosed in quotation points, and even though the writer of the diary made use of such terminology, such usage is incorrect and misleading. Since the diarist was a non-combatant and a surgeon, his faulty use of technical language can be understood. The term "steam gun," as generally accepted in Civil War historical usage, applies to the several steam-driven centrifugal force guns that were invented and experimented with by private individuals and army technicians during the war. One of these novel weapons, the celebrated Winans Steam Gun, invented by Charles S. Dickinson of Baltimore, and said to have been built in the foundry of Ross Winans of the same city, received widespread publicity during the early months of the war. Somewhat resembling a steam fire-engine,² this remarkable piece of ordnance was in reality an early attempt to produce a machine gun. It consisted of a steel barrel into which bullets were fed from a revolving drum controlled by several valves, and was designed to discharge its missiles at the rate of three hundred per minute. The whole was mounted on a four-wheeled platform on which was also mounted a boiler and engine which supplied power for mobility and

¹ T. Frederick Davis, "First 'Steam' Gun in Action," in *The Journal of the American Military History Foundation*, II (1938), 172-174.

² A detailed drawing of the Winans Gun appears in E. G. Squire [ed.], *Frank Leslie's Pictorial History of the American Civil War* (New York, 1862), p. 41. A small drawing also appears in Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial History of the Civil War in the United States of America* (Hartford, 1866), I, 440.

for projecting the bullets.³ In referring to the Confederate railway ordnance in Florida as a steam gun, Mr. Davis may readily confuse his reader as to the real nature of the latter, or may cause his reader to associate such weapons as the Winans Steam Gun with artillery designed to be moved with railway locomotives. The Winans Gun was equipped with its own motive power, and was intended for use on ordinary roads, or in any theatre of action where the ground permitted it to move.

The point of terminology is small and insignificant in comparison to Mr. Davis' assertion that the operations with the railway gun at Jacksonville in 1863 were "probably the first actual use of a 'railroad battery' in warfare in American history."⁴ The Federal government had built at the Baldwin Locomotive works in Philadelphia a heavily armored car, equipped with a revolving rifled gun and loopholes for musket fire, as early as May, 1861.⁵ Evidence of the actual use of this materiel is lacking. A contemporary press notice stated that it would be used to protect the railway lines and bridges to and from the capital, as a preventative measure to insure against a repetition of the damage inflicted on the tracks and bridges of the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad that occurred in April 1861.⁶ It appears that this armored railway gun was later sent to General Herman Haupt, Chief of the Bureau of Military Railroads, by Assistant Secretary of War Peter H. Watson, during the summer of 1862. Haupt found it not suited to his use, and consigned it to inactivity on an old siding in the yards at Alexandria.⁷

The first actual use of American railway ordnance seems to date from the Peninsular Campaign of 1862, a year prior to the incident described by Surgeon Walton, when at the suggestion of General Lee, a railroad battery was built for the Confederate service for use on the York River Railroad to halt the advance of McClellan along this line. On June 5, 1862, Lee wrote to his Chief Engineer, Major W. H. Stevens, stating that he suspected the Union artillerists of "constructing a railroad battery, probably plated with iron to push along the road [railroad] and sweep the country."⁸ To oppose these supposed operations, and to block McClellan's advance, Lee suggested that the Confederate engineers

³ New York *Tribune* [Weekly], May 4, 1861; Baltimore *American*, May 11, May 13, and May 14, 1861; Thomas Winans [son of Ross Winans] to W. J. Welding, May 4, 1861, published in the Baltimore *American*, May 9, 1861; Frank Moore [ed.], *Rebellion Record* (New York, 1861), I ["Incidents"], 98.

Another example of this type of weapon was the McCarthy steam centrifugal force gun, an account of which appears in the New York *Tribune*, June 20, 1861.

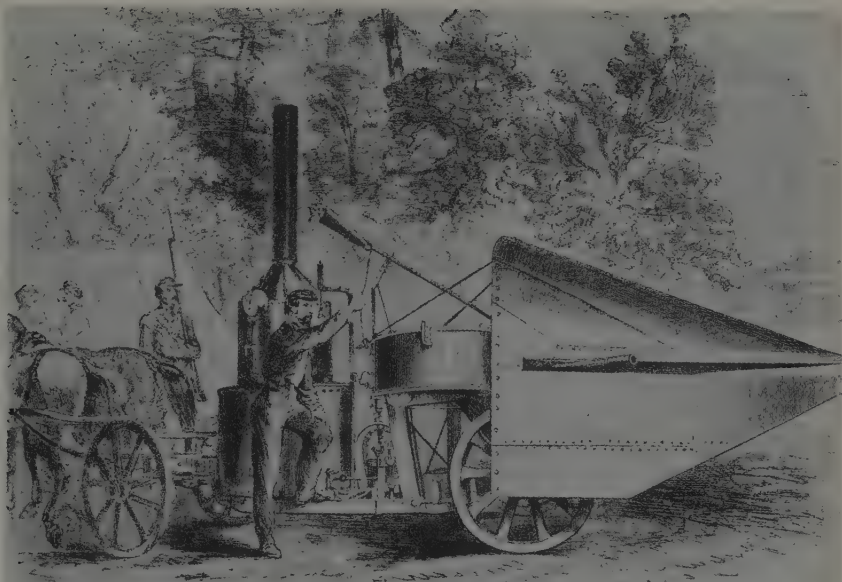
⁴ Davis, *loc. cit.*, p. 174.

⁵ Philadelphia *Ledger*, May 6, 1861. Drawings of this armored railway battery are published in Lossing, I, 441, and in Leslie, p. 35. A contemporary statistical description of the battery also appears in Leslie, p. 46.

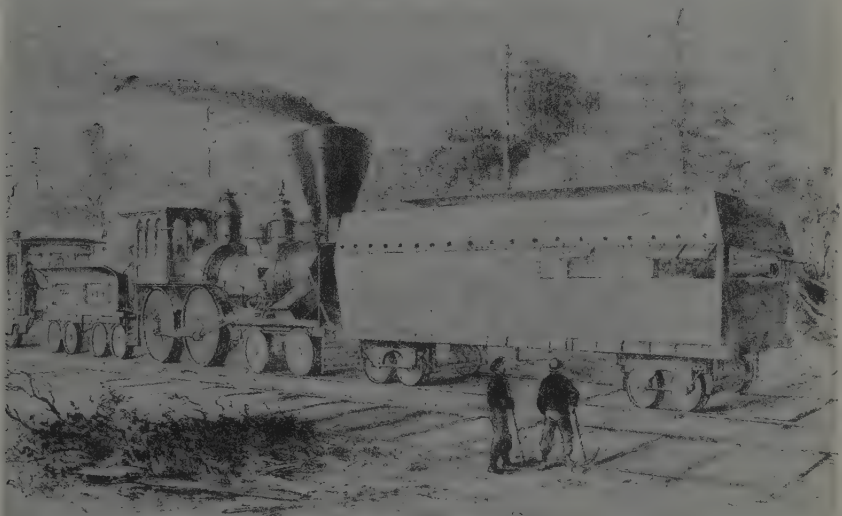
⁶ Philadelphia *Ledger*, May 6, 1861; Baltimore *American*, May 6, 1861.

⁷ Gen. Herman Haupt, *Reminiscences of General Herman Haupt* (Privately Printed, 1901), p. 113.

⁸ Lee to Stevens, June 5, 1862, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1881-1901), Series I, XI, Part iii, p. 574. [Cited as O. R.]



THE WINANS STEAM GUN
After Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*



THE RAILROAD BATTERY ON THE PHILADELPHIA, WILMINGTON
AND BALTIMORE RAILROAD
After Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper*

"construct a railroad battery . . . plated and protected with a heavy gun." ⁹ On the same day he further addressed a similar suggestion to Colonel Josiah Gorgas, Chief of the Confederate Department of Ordnance, asking if there might not be "a possibility of constructing an iron-plated battery, mounting a heavy gun, on trucks, the whole covered with iron, to move along the York River Railroad." ¹⁰ He further instructed Gorgas to confer with the Navy Department and its officers, and pointed out that such a piece of ordnance would be "of immense advantage." He also suggested that mortars be used in a similar manner. ¹¹ So keenly did Lee feel about the value of the idea, that he dispatched a third letter the same day, this one to Captain George Minor, Chief of Ordnance and Hydrography of the Confederate Navy Department, in which he repeated his suggestion:

I am very anxious to have a railroad battery. I wrote to Colonel Gorgas on the subject this morning and asked him to get you and Brooke ¹² to aid me. Till something better could be accomplished I proposed a Dahlgren or columbiad, on a ship's carriage, on a railroad flat, with one of your navy iron aprons adjusted to it to protect gun and men. If I could get it in position by daylight tomorrow, I could astonish our neighbors. The enemy cannot get up his heavy guns except by railroad. We must block his progress. ¹³

Confident of the potential value of such a battery, he also reported to President Davis the same day that efforts were being made to check McClellan's advance on the railroad, and so that end he had written "to see if I can get made an iron battery on trucks with a heavy gun to sweep the country in our front." ¹⁴

Lee's hope to have the gun in action by June 6 was doomed to disappointment. It was not until June 21 that Colonel Gorgas informed the General that the railway battery would be ready for action the following day. ¹⁵ The new type of materiel had been constructed by the Navy Department, and Lee asked Secretary Mallory to assign a crew of naval artillerists and an officer to take charge of and operate it. With customary courtesy, despite the delay of sixteen days, Lee closed his letter by saying that "I am very much obliged to you for your kindness as well as promptness in its construction." ¹⁶ The novel ordnance was not, however, fully ready for action until June 24. ¹⁷

Some details of this first railway gun to see active service in American military history may be of interest. It was designed by Lieutenant John Mercer Brooke, C. S. N., ¹⁸ an officer who had been prominent in the raising of the U.S.S. *Merrimac* and in converting her into the famous C. S. S. *Virginia*. ¹⁹ The gun was a rifled

⁹ Lee to Stevens, June 5, 1862, *O. R.*, Ser. I, XI, Pt. iii, 574.

¹⁰ Lee to Gorgas, June 5, 1862, *O. R.*, Ser. I, XI, Pt. iii, 574.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Lieutenant John Mercer Brooke, C. S. N.

¹³ Lee to Minor, June 5, 1862, *O. R.*, Ser. I, XI, Pt. iii, 575-576.

¹⁴ Lee to Jefferson Davis, June 5, 1862, in Douglas Southall Freeman, [ed.], *Lee's Dispatches* (New York, 1915), pp. 7-8.

¹⁵ Lee to Mallory, June 21, 1862, *O. R.*, Ser. I, XI, Pt. iii, 610.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Minor to Lee, June 24, 1862, *O. R.*, Ser. I, XI, Pt. iii, 615.

¹⁸ Minor to Lee, June 24, 1862, *loc. cit.*, p. 615.

¹⁹ John M. Brooke, *et al.*, "The Plan and Construction of the *Merrimac*," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, 1887), I, 715-716; John Taylor Wood [Colonel, C. S. A.], "The First Fight of Ironclads," *ibid.*, 693.

and banded 32-pounder, weighing 5,700 pounds.²⁰ It was mounted on a railway flatcar and was protected in front by a sloping iron-plated shield, through which a port-hole had been cut for the muzzle of the gun. The sides of the car were protected with stout timbered walls, lined with iron.²¹ The mountings and other equipment were designed by Lieutenant R. D. Minor, C. S. N. Its original supply of ammunition consisted of 200 rounds, including a number of 15-inch solid bolt shot.²²

The railroad gun was first used in action during the Seven Days' Battles. It was referred to by Brigadier General William W. Burns²³ in the action at Savage's Station (June 29) as "General Lee's famous railroad monitor."²⁴ The line of the York River Railroad ran through part of the sector held by Kershaw's Brigade of McLaws' Division, Magruder's Corps. The Union forces opposing this front had placed obstructions to block the advance of the railroad gun, which were removed by a detail personally ordered for this duty by their corps commander, General Magruder. A heavy fire directed by Federal artillery on the railroad was answered with effect by the railway battery which advanced after the obstructions had been cleared.²⁵ As the Confederate advance swept on to Savage's Station, the gun, under command of Lieutenant James E. Barry, was pushed forward near the railroad bridge near the depot. Here it was used to clear the cut over which the bridge was thrown, and to rake the massed Federal infantry in the declivity below. This mission was accomplished, Magruder reports, with "terrible effect."²⁶ The Union artillery then brought a severe fire to bear upon the bridge, and a heavy column of infantry was advanced to turn the position. Reinforcements ordered up by Magruder repulsed this attack, and the Federals were forced back with heavy losses.²⁷ The part played by Lieutenant Barry and his railroad battery elicited the admiration of the division commander, General McLaws, who stated that Barry's "enthusiasm at the decided success of the experiment and in pushing through obstructions deserve all praise."²⁸

Whether or not this use of railroad ordnance in the Seven Days' Battles suggested the operation of similar materiel to Lieutenant Thomas E. Buckman at

²⁰ Minor to Lee, June 24, 1862, *loc. cit.*, p. 615.

²¹ Report of Major General Lafayette McLaws, Battles of Savage's Station and Malvern Hill, July 20, 1862, *O. R.*, Ser. I, XI, Pt. ii, 717-718.

²² George Minor to Lee, June 24, 1862, *loc. cit.*, p. 615.

²³ Commanding 2nd Brigade, Sedgwick's Division, Sumner's [2nd] Corps, Army of the Potomac.

²⁴ Letter of General Burns, dated Governor's Island, May 10, 1885, in General William B. Franklin, "Rear Guard Fighting During the Change of Base," *Battles and Leaders*, II, 374. A map, showing the positions of the opposing forces and the terrain at the battle of Savage's Station, with the route of the railway battery indicated, appears on the same page of the above cited work.

²⁵ Report of Major General J. Bankhead Magruder, Battles of Savage's Station, Glendale, and Malvern Hill, August 12, 1862, *O. R.*, Ser. I, XI, Pt. ii, 663, 664.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 664.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 665.

²⁸ Report of Major General Lafayette McLaws, July 20, 1862, *loc. cit.*, pp. 717-718.

Jacksonville the following year, must remain a matter of conjecture, as well as does the possibility of the two instances of such ordnance in Confederate service influencing the Federal army to resort to the same tactics still another year later. The supposition that Union officers coming North and relating the Jacksonville incident caused the use of railway guns and mortars in Grant's operations before Petersburg in 1864 is not convincing. Many ranking officers in Grant's army witnessed the use of the Brooke railway gun while serving on the Peninsula with McClellan. The idea could not have been new to them in 1864.

Lee's use of the railway battery described above, however, is by no means obscure to the average reader of Civil War history. In Dr. Freeman's widely read and definitive biography of Lee, the incident is brought to the reader's attention as the "birth of railway ordnance."²⁹ The historian of Lee's artillery service, Wise, also mentions it.³⁰ It cannot be said with truth, however, that the episode was the first application of ordnance to railway mountings in this country, since the construction of the armored car and rifled gun in May, 1861, pre-dated it by more than a year; but since there is no evidence that this earlier railroad gun was ever used in action against an enemy force, it is reasonably safe to assume that the incident on the York River Railroad in June 1862 was the first time that railway ordnance was operated on the battlefield in America.

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THE AFFAIR AT PAOLI AND THE ORIGIN OF THE RED FEATHER

In a recent issue of the *JOURNAL* there is a reference to an action on the banks of the Brandywine Creek September 26, 1777.¹ Mention is made of a "surprise night attack upon a detachment of General Wayne's brigade." It is possible that the author has confused this action with the night surprise attack at Paoli on September 20.

In the present writer's study of the campaign of 1777 he has not been able to trace any action between American and British troops on the banks of the Brandywine Creek on September 26. At this time, the British had crossed the Schuylkill River, and were on their way towards Philadelphia. The map in the journal of John Andre gives the date of the crossing as September 25. In view of the distance of about sixteen miles from the point of the crossing to the Brandywine it seems improbable that a detachment of the British would be so far away in enemy territory. Moreover, Wayne was at that time smarting from the effects of the night attack by Gray at Paoli, and is recorded as being back with the main body of Washington's army near Potts Grove, in northern Chester County.

²⁹ Douglas Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee* (New York, 1934), II, 83.

³⁰ Jennings Cropper Wise, *The Long Arm of Lee* (Lynchburg, 1915), I, 197, 216.

¹ Emil John Ruckert, "Survivals of American Service in British Regiments," in *Journal of the American Military History Foundation*, I (1937), 194-95.

The writer knows, however, that there was an engagement of some sort between the British and the Americans on or about September 26; but is under the impression that this was in Charlestown Township near the Schuylkill River. This, if the presumption is correct, was part of a feint made by General Howe northward along the west bank of the Schuylkill River in the direction of the American stores at Warwick and Coventry. Washington was completely deceived by the move, and immediately countermarched from Pennypacker's Mill toward Potts Grove (now Pottstown) in order to interpose his army. While he was so doing, the British crossed the river, and proceeded toward Philadelphia. Most of the crossing took place at Norriton (now Norristown), but some units crossed at Fatland Ford and near the present town of Phoenixville.

There is an interesting side to this question, one that has been something of a problem of research. This is in regard to the movements of General Smallwood, of the Maryland Militia, who was to have arrived at White Horse Tavern in time to join the forces of Wayne on the night of September 19. He had come up from Nottingham, Pennsylvania, and was delayed in making the contact with Wayne until after the night attack by Gray. It is possible that the action referred to by Mr. Ruckert was some action, hitherto unrecorded, on the part of some of Smallwood's troops along the line of the British communications which, at that time extended parallel to the Brandywine to Wilmington.

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Dr. Pleasants' carefully detailed criticism is welcome since it has shown that some British sources are confused in the facts concerning this action. Without doubt the Royal Berkshires wear the red patch in commemoration of the Paoli affair, September 20, 1777.—Editor.

THE MARKINGS OF ENGLISH CANNON CAPTURED AT YORKTOWN

Through the courtesy of the War Department, a number of the British cannon surrendered here by Cornwallis in October, 1781, have been returned to the Colonial National Historical Park at Yorktown, Virginia. The guns were all cast in England, and vary in date from 1727 to 1773. The calibers of the cannon are 3-, 6-, and 12-pounders; of the howitzers 5.8-inch and 8-inch, and there is one 10-inch mortar. All are made of brass (bronze).

The guns will be mounted in their respective batteries, now restored, on carriages reproduced from original drawings by the Park Service technicians. Several of these have already been completed and placed in the batteries. This is slow, tedious labor, due to the nature of construction, and there is a crew of men constantly at work preparing the carriages and accoutrements.

On each of the eighteenth century guns there are two coats of arms, cyphers, or



Royal coat of arms of George I on the chase (1a)

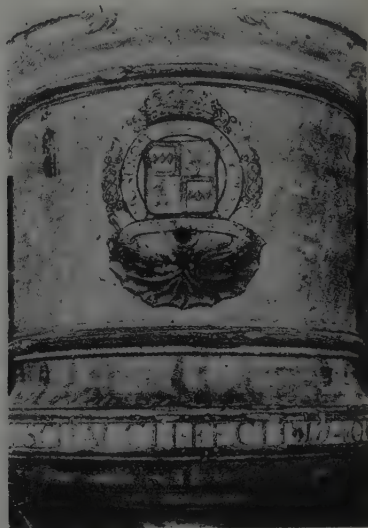


Coat of arms of John, Duke of Argyll on the breech (1b)

ENGLISH 8-INCH HOWITZER, BRONZE, MADE BY A. SCHALCH, 1727



Royal coat of arms of George II on the chase (2a)



Coat of arms of John, Duke of Montague on the breech (2b)

ENGLISH 8-INCH HOWITZER, BRONZE, MADE BY A. SCHALCH, 1740

monograms beside the name of the maker or founder.¹ One of the monograms is that of the sovereign of the period when the gun was cast, the other that of a ranking officer either in the Ordnance Department or the army to which the gun was assigned. There were only two officers whose rank and nobility would permit them to place their coats of arms or monograms beside that of the King. They were, in the order of their importance, the Master General of Ordnance and the Lieutenant General of Ordnance. The greater share of the honors went to the former.

The practice of placing these distinguishing marks on the guns seems to derive from the time when brass came into popular use in gun casting. Brass is very adaptable for cutting and engraving and gave the artisans a chance to demonstrate their craft. Hence, many of the early guns were very ornate. This, however, began to lessen gradually until, in the middle of the eighteenth century, only the two coats of arms were still being placed on the breech, reinforce, or chase. By then they had also given a greater mark of consequence to the piece.

Tousard, in his introduction to the *American Artillerist's Companion*, says of these markings:

To that consequence may undoubtedly be attributed the remarkable efforts which the Swiss made for the defence of the artillery of their ally Charles VIII, at his retreat from Naples, and the victory obtained by Francis I, against the same Swiss at Marignan, by the retaking of his artillery at the very moment he had nearly lost the battle.

In lieu of Armorial, sovereigns have substituted the initial letters of their names cyphered and ornamented with the crown of their imperial, regal, &c. dignity. They are still counted among the chief attributes of victory; for many ages the two crowned LL, and GR, have inspired those who served the French and English artillery, with an energy and courage, such as constantly and justly have proved them worthy the confidence of their respective sovereigns. It would carry me too far to follow the French artillery through the prodigies they are in these days performing with the imperial crown supported by the double NN. Scarcely a bulletin passes without some mention of their brilliant achievements and marks of the esteem of their imperial sovereign.

After 1764-65 the French almost entirely discontinued the embossing, and instead, placed, by engraving, the royal monogram and crown on the breech and the name of the gun on the chase.

By 1770 the English had also discontinued the embossing, and substituted the engraving. The Yorktown guns, with the exception of one, are embossed; this one is a small 3-pounder cast by I. & P. Verbruggen, Woolwich Arsenal, 1775, and bears only the English broad arrow stamped on the reinforced field directly above the trunnions. All the cannon have engraved on the chase the following inscription, "SURRENDERED BY THE CAPITULATION IN YORKTOWN, OCT. 19, 1781."

The oldest gun is an 8-inch howitzer, cast in 1727, and bears the royal arms of George I on the chase, and the coat of arms of John, Duke of Argyll, on the

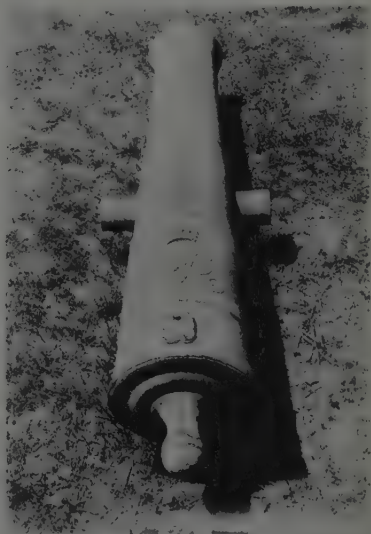
¹ Principal sources for foundry methods are Favé, *Etudes sur le passé et l'avenir de l'artillerie* (Paris, 1863), John Muller, *A Treatise of Artillery* (London, 1756), and Louis de Tousard, *American Artillerist's Companion* (Philadelphia, 1809).



ENGLISH 10-INCH MORTAR, BRONZE, MADE BY A. SCHALCH, 1741
Royal coat of arms of George II on the chase(3a)



ENGLISH 10-INCH MORTAR, BRONZE,
MADE BY A. SCHALCH, 1741
Coat of arms of John, Duke of Montague on the
breech(3b)



ENGLISH 24-POUNDER, SHORT, BRONZE,
MADE BY A. SCHALCH, 1748
Crown and monogram of George II on the breech; mon-
ogram of John, Duke of Montague on reinforced field(4)

breech (1a and 1b).² John, Duke of Argyll and Greenwich, was Master General of Ordnance from June 3, 1725 to May 10, 1730.

There is another 8-inch howitzer similar to the aforementioned, cast in 1740. This gun bears the royal coat of arms of George II on the chase, and the ducal coat of arms of John, Duke of Montague, on the breech (2a and 2b). John, Duke of Montague, was Master General of Ordnance from May 10, 1730 to May 10, 1755. Both of these howitzers were cast before the rimbores were placed on the trunnions; in later years wrought iron rimbores have been substituted. Both guns were cast by A. Schalch, who was master founder of the Woolwich Arsenal from 1716 to 1770, at which time he retired.

There is also a 10-inch mortar made by A. Schalch in 1741 bearing the royal arms of George II and the coat of arms of John, Duke of Montague (3a and 3b).

It was not always the custom to place the full coat of arms, either royal or ducal, on the ordnance; at times only the crown and monogram were used, as is shown on one gun (4), which is a short 24-pounder made by A. Schalch in 1748. It has besides the royal monogram on the breech, the ducal crown and letter M, which in this instance denotes the Duke of Montague. This particular gun is located at Fort Monroe, Virginia, and bears the inscription, "SURRENDERED BY THE CONVENTION OF SARATOGA OCT. 17, 1777."

To be concluded in the following issue.

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QUERIES

31. NATIONAL GUARD DESIGNATIONS. There are eight National Guard units, seven regiments and one separate company, which retain their original state designations and are not obliged to conform to the prevailing National Guard numbering in the familiar 101-300 bracket: 1st Sep. Co. (colored), Md.; 1st Inf., Md.; 1st Inf., Va.; 5th Inf., Md.; 8th Inf., (colored), Ill.; 10th Inf., N. Y.; 14th Inf., N. Y.; 71st Inf., N. Y. (for the general rule, see AR 220-5, July 13, 1926). What is the reason for this? Offhand it would seem that there are other National Guard units at least equally entitled to retain their original numbers.

L. S. C.

REPLIES

26. COMMISSARY GENERAL OF PURCHASES. The office of Commissary General of Purchases was created by the act of Congress of March 28, 1812. It was the duty of this officer "to conduct the procuring and providing of all

²References for armorial bearing: Sir John Bernard Burke, *The General Armory of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales* . . . (London, 1884) and *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage* . . . and *Knightage* (London, 1897).

arms, military stores, clothing, and generally all articles of supply." The same act established the Quartermaster's Department which was directed "to purchase military stores, camp equipage, and other articles requisite for the troops, and generally to procure and provide means of transport for the Army, its stores, artillery, and camp equipage."

It can readily be seen that no clear line was drawn between the authority and functions of the two offices; both acted under direct orders of the Secretary of War. Actually the Commissary General appears to have procured the clothing, camp and garrison equipage, arms and ordnance stores, and medicine and hospital supplies for the army, while the Quartermaster General provided for the transportation of such stores to the proper destination. He also provided forage, fuel and straw and most of the heavier supplies, such as wagons and the like.

After the war, the Commissary General's office was gradually stripped of its functions, power and personnel, until by 1821 there remained only the officer himself and two military storekeepers. His duties at this time were confined to procuring and manufacturing clothing for the army and providing camp and garrison equipage. In 1826, the Quartermaster's Department took over the distribution and accounting of the clothing, and the relation between the two departments was somewhat modified. At no time, however, during the existence of the office of Commissary General was that officer subordinate to the Quartermaster General. He always received his authority from the Secretary of War and in later years (1832-1842) from the Clothing Bureau, an office under the direct supervision of the Secretary.

It is interesting to note that the history of the office revolves principally about the career of one man, Callender Irvine, son of General William Irvine, since it was held by him from 1812 until his death in 1841. He was virtually the only Commissary General of Purchases, as the office lasted less than a year after his death. His successor, J. Washington Tyson, remained only until August 23, 1842, when Congress abolished the office and assigned its duties to the Quartermaster's Department. cursory examination of the facts would appear to indicate that he was in no small degree responsible for the creation of the office and he certainly prolonged its life for a number of years in spite of active opposition in other quarters.

ELBERT HUBER.

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